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Smashing DETECTIVE STORIES

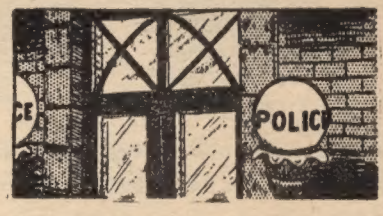
Volume 3 September, 1954 Number 3

Our Feature Novel

MURDER BY THE BOOK

by Carroll John Daly 8

In order to turn his knowledge into evidence that a court would accept, Baldwin Scott had to force the as-yet unknown culprit to play along with Scott's own plans.



Novelet

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All they knew for sure was that the killer wasn't left-handed!

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Next Issue on Sale October 1st

Robert W. Lowndes, Editor

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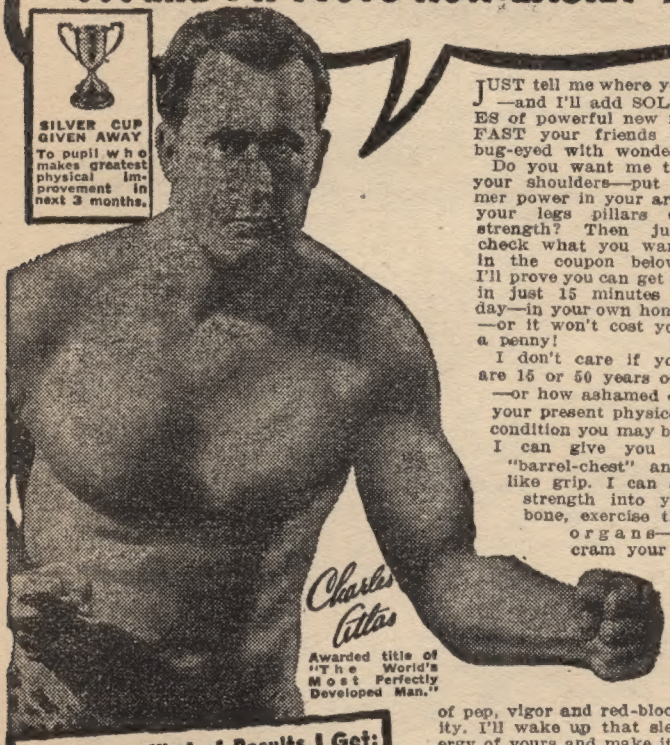
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SPOTLIGHT ON CRIME

★ FURTHER RECOLLECTIONS OF A POLICE CHIEF ★
by Harold Gluck

In our last issue, Chief George W. Walling told of the great Manhattan Bank robbery of 1878, and of the capture of some members of the gang responsible, and the recovery of most of the money. However, as we shall see below, certain persons connected with that robbery remained at large, to participate in further crimes.

NEW YORK'S Thirty-fifth Precinct is a straggling annex of the great city, and in some parts it is as sparsely settled as the Adirondacks. In no part of it were there fewer houses than in the neighborhood of what is known as "Tramps' Rock." This landmark is close to the dividing line between Westchester County and the County of New York, which runs from Clara Morris' country villa to Williams Bridge over the Bronx River. No more favorable neighborhood for the commission of crime, or for the concealing of its results, could be selected.

On the 4th of June, 1884, Mounted Patrolman E. Johnstone, while riding over his district was not very much surprised when he found, near the base of the rock, the partly decomposed body of a man who, he supposed, had committed suicide. There was nothing startling in the appearance of the body or its surroundings, so far as casual observation went. It was carried to an undertaker's morgue in Yonkers, where it remained for some days.

The man appeared to have shot himself with a white-handled revolver. The weapon was found near the body.

Under ordinary circumstances the body would have been buried at the expense of the county, and there would have been an end of the matter. But local reporters for the New York press investigated the finding of the body, and published an accurate description of the corpse and the clothing on it. Equally singular was the lack of common prudence displayed by Madame Mandelbaum, the notorious "fence." A "client" of hers—George Leonidas Leslie, alias Western George, George Howard, J. G. Allison, George K. Leslie, C. G. Greene, etc., ad infinitum—had been missing for several days. In a certain sense, Leslie was the chief of her clique of silk-stealing and bank-breaking friends, a man who had brought to her coffers many thousands of dollars. Mrs. Mandelbaum dared not appear at Yonkers, but instead sent her chosen associate, Herman Steid, to ascertain if the body was that of Leslie.

Steid's usual self-possession deserted him when confronted with the dead. His emotion was so manifest that the local coroner felt assured that the visitor could tell something of the supposed suicide. He questioned him adroitly, obtaining a sufficient clue on which to base further inquiries, and allowed him to return to New York. Pursuing his investigations, the coroner visited New York and made his errand public. The press became interested, and by degrees the particulars of one of the foulest and best-planned murders of the age was obtained.

GEORGE LEONIDAS LESLIE was by descent an Englishman, his father, in 1840, emigrating to this coun-

[*Turn To Page* 82]

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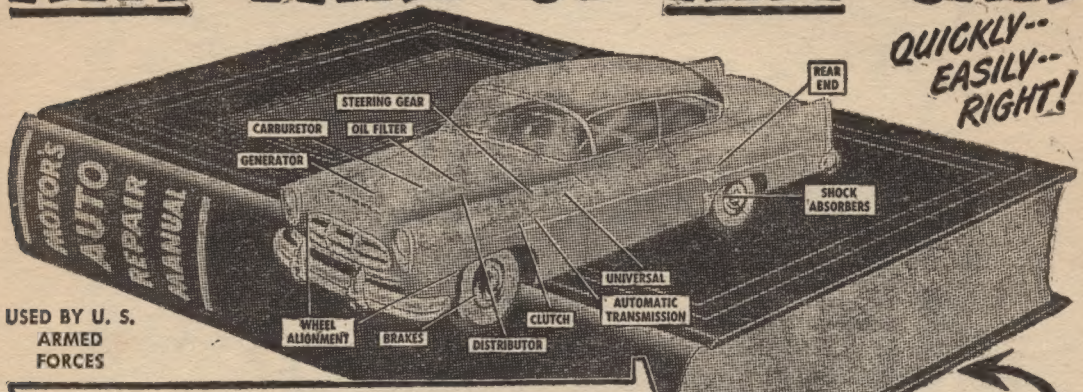

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The butler found Farrington dead — shot — with Alice lying beside him. The gun held her fingerprints.

MURDER BY THE BOOK

Feature Novel Of Strange Mystery

by Carroll John Daly

THE CRIME itself was a particularly tragic one. A young, cultured and highly educated girl killing her own father.

"I can't believe it," I said to Baldwin Scott. "It was too bizarre."

"Murder, my dear Corey, is hardly ever conventional."

Since he had flown across the country at his own expense and we were now driving the twenty-five miles to Palm Springs from my desert home in Indio, I mentioned the matter of money to Baldwin.

"If we prove the girl innocent, surely we'll be amply paid for our time," he said; "she'll be heir to a great fortune. If she is guilty of murder, then the widow—the young, and I presume beautiful, second wife of the dead banker—will inherit the money, since a convicted murderer cannot inherit in California."

"I wouldn't count too much on that," I advised him. "The girl was found unconscious beside her father's body in the guest-house where the retired banker worked on his book; the gun was by her hand. She says she has no recollection of what happened, but admits that she walks in her sleep. Indeed, that has been proved. Murder while asleep—unique in crime?"

"Rare—very rare—but not unique. You must recall the classic crime of the French detective who, after tracing down a murder, discovered the murderer to be himself—while walking in his sleep. Then, there was the case of Mabel Thompson in Vermont—late in the eighties. A middle-aged spinster."

We rode along in silence. I recalled Baldwin Scott's interest in crime back in our college days. But he had only played at it. Then suddenly, he made a name for himself. The last time I had visited him in New York, he had cracked the Haymeyer case, and almost on top of that came his startling solution of the Robinson-Turner murders that involved nearly half a million dollars. Now I asked him about his sudden success.

"My mental gymnastics or mental hokus-pokus, as you called it at school, paid off when I began to read those detective novels you saw in my bag. They put me into the big time," he said.

"You're not serious." I looked at him, then back to the road. "Surely, the detective of fiction can have nothing to do with the detective of fact. Why, the author simply plans what the criminal will do and—"

"The detective of fact should do the same thing," he interrupted me. "I mean it, Corey; detective stories are the text books of crime."

"But the crimes and their solutions are all planned ahead."

"Of course they are—and so is your life, or it should be. Crime is a puzzle, a game of chess—the maneuvering of an army in the field. Your own actions should direct the actions of the criminal you seek."

"But good Lord, man, if you don't know who the criminal is?"

"You solve puzzles without knowing who concocted them," he told me. "You defeat an opponent in chess by forcing him to make certain moves. The game might be played by mail with an opponent you have never seen or heard of. A general in the field so maneuvers his own forces as to direct the movement of the opposing army. Is directing the criminal any different?"

"But—" I was amazed, "is that the way you always work it out?"

"No," he shook his head. "I have no hard and fast rule, any more than the good detective in fiction has. The readable detective of fiction uses instinct and reason and when they meet and merge, he knows who his man is. But he knows, too, as does the detective of fact, that knowledge is not evidence—therefore, he plans to turn that knowledge into evidence with a dramatic denouement. He makes his plans and forces the criminal to fall in with those plans; this pleases the reader in fiction and this, too, pleases the public in fact. Right?"

"It's right if it works," I agreed.

"Oh, it works," he said tapping the suitcase at his feet. "If more law-enforcement officers would read the literature of their profession, more crimes

would be solved. Where do you think the boys and girls who write this literature get their ideas? Why, from people. And who commits our crimes? People. The police say, Smith murdered Jones. Reason tells me they are right—but something inside of me which I call intuition or instinct, but is in reality the knowledge of people—tells me that Smith didn't murder Jones."

"Then what?"

"Then we have a situation. Reason and instinct are in conflict; we must bring them together. If Smith killed Jones, reason is right. But once reason and instinct agree, you have a solution."

"And your instinct was wrong."

"No," he shook his head. "My *use* of instinct was wrong. For you see, if my instinct is right, then it is not reason that is wrong—but the use of reason. I stick pretty close to the books, for who knows more about crime than the one who both commits and solves them?"

I DID NOT know now if Baldwin Scott was serious or not. I never had known even when we roomed together at college. But he was a most successful crime consultant; the newspapers called him the mental detective.

After a bit, I got back to the murder that had brought him nearly three thousand miles. "You find this case—particularly appealing?" I asked.

"Murder while asleep," he said, "has its points. We also must entertain the possibility that the girl murdered her father while awake and tried to account for her presence near his body by telling them that she was sleepwalking."

Yes, I could see that. He thought her guilty. Everybody did; that is everybody except my Aunt Cornelia, who said simply, "I don't believe it. Not such a nice young girl—and her own father." At Baldwin's suggestion then I went over the details of the murder again.

Alice Farrington *did* walk in her sleep, but not often lately. She did not get along with her stepmother—a natural feeling of jealousy there. The stepmother, a former small bit-movie cutie, was now only thirty-one. But that was not the trouble Alice Farrington had with her father.

First, it was her desire to go on the stage. This was no whim of a foolish stage-struck girl; she was a very fine and talented dramatic actress. That had been demonstrated over and over in her appearance with the Palm Springs Little Theatre group. The second trouble was, and it so far overshadowed the other that the first was forgotten, the boy she was determined to marry. He lived the year around in our great winter playground and owned and operated a gas station.

"And the father's objection?" Baldwin Scott wanted to know.

"Position, quite evidently. I know this Robert Morse, a nice young fellow. Old Benjamin Farrington didn't spend a fortune educating his daughter to marry the operator of a gas station; he was class conscious."

"Not necessarily." Baldwin shook his head. "Perhaps it was simply a fear of incompatibility of interests. And the father laid down an ultimatum?"

"He threatened to disinherit his only child, Alice. Even sent for his lawyer,

but whether it was to change his will or not, the lawyer doesn't know. He was dead before the lawyer saw him."

"If he changed his will, would the widow inherit the entire estate?"

"No—she wouldn't; he spoke of leaving the bulk of his wealth to charity. As the will stands now, the daughter, Alice, gets most of it and the widow a fair income for life if she does not remarry. Everyone seems to know exactly what was in the will. Farrington was having trouble with his wife over her brother, Paul Strout, who was living at the Farrington house."

"So Farrington didn't get along with the brother—either. Not a very congenial household."

"I guess not," I agreed. "The dead man was fond of his wife; but the brother gambled, and the sister would do anything for him, and I guess Benjamin Farrington was afraid he'd chisel the money out of her. He's sort of irresponsible—but a rather likable chap."

"Most of them are," Baldwin nodded. "Now to the murder again, Corey. The newspaper accounts have been scanty; verbose enough on the sleepwalking part, but nothing I could get my teeth into."

I HAD ONLY the barest of facts myself. "There's isn't much," I told him. "The bell rang in the butler's room in the main house at two o'clock that fatal morning last week. Not unexpected, but nevertheless alarming. The banker's heart was not too good, and the butler, Simms, thought he had an attack. He slipped on his trousers and dressing-gown, and hurried across the patio to the guest-house. He found the banker dead in his chair and the girl, Alice, lying by the open fire, the gun by her hand. One of the heavy andirons was overturned, and she had quite evidently hit her head on it and knocked herself unconscious." And when he said nothing, "That is about all. Except—well, her fingerprints were on the gun, or so they say."

"The police version?"

"Since the girl was in her pajamas, they cater to the idea that she either walked in her sleep, or planned it so that if she were discovered, it would appear that she walked in her sleep. They say she got out of bed, went below to her father's study, in the house itself—took his gun from a drawer of the desk, crossed the patio to the guest house, and shot her father through the head. Perhaps the shot awoke her, and aghast and shocked at what she did—or panic-stricken and awake all the time—she turned, ran wildly and brought up at the fireplace, hit her head on the andiron, and fell unconscious to the floor, knocking the andiron over with her."

"And the bell. How did the father ring that?"

"As they surmise it, the father turned, saw her entering the room with the gun in her hand. The bell was there on the desk; he had but to press the button. And—and he did."

"The girl—what does she say?"

"That she remembers nothing after going to bed a little after eleven, until she came to in the guest-house with Simms, the butler, bending over her—and the body of her father there in the chair. If she is telling the truth, it must have been quite a shock to her."

"Oh, quite," he agreed. "And your theory?"

"I fancy the sleepwalking. It is inconceivable to me that she could have been thrown into such a panic if she had cold-bloodedly and voluntarily shot her own father dead. If she was asleep—and the report of the gun awoke her to the realization of what she had done, then I can understand the wild panic—and the subsequent crash against the heavy andiron. She's in the hospital now under police guard. She's suffering from shock. But here is Palm Springs."

2

PALM SPRINGS is a bustling little city during the winter months. To say that it is informal is putting it mildly. Women in playsuits wander in and out of the stores and restaurants; men do the same in jeans and cowboy boots and big hats or in shorts of various colors. Figure, form, or good taste do not dictate the dress, or rather undress, of the winter visitor. One sees some strange and weird sights.

We swung into the village that lay there in the desert at the foot of the mountains.

Sergeant Randolph at the police station received us pleasantly. He had heard of Baldwin Scott, which indeed he should have, since I had played him up in my weekly newspaper.

"Well," the Sergeant said, "I see no objection to your visiting Miss Farrington if Doctor Johns doesn't. I don't know what good it will do; I'm not much up on sleepwalking. I suppose it will be a plea like insanity. Frank Bronson is a good lawyer, but I should think he'd get legal talent from Los Angeles. Why not? There is a lot of money involved. The girl is not charged yet—simply being held as a material witness."

Sergeant Randolph spoke freely about the killing. He had arrived at the scene of the murder before the coroner; he had found Alice Farrington hysterical and crying out, "Why did I do it? How could I do it?"

"I feel sorry for that young girl." He shook his head, "Mind you, I don't say she was awake or asleep." Putting a friendly hand on my shoulder, he added, "Between you and me, Corey, I think the D.A. would jump at the sleepwalking angle; it sort of turns your stomach otherwise."

The Sergeant said, quite frankly, that they felt the case was solved. He had questioned the members of the family and the servants, and even Robert Morse, the girl's fiance. That was simple routine; he didn't suspect any of them. He couldn't, under the circumstances. He had placed them all at the time of the crime. Dolores Farrington, the young wife and now widow, was in bed and asleep. So was her brother, Paul Strout. The same went for Robert Morse.

"So," Baldwin said, "all the alibis are no alibis at all."

"I didn't look on them as alibis," Sergeant Randolph explained. "Simply sworn statements of fact; it's natural for people to be in bed and asleep at two in the morning. You haven't got other ideas, have you?"

Baldwin shook his head. "No ideas at all, Sergeant. Corey asked me to cover the story for his paper. Isn't it possible that the girl didn't commit the murder? That she found her father dead? Was struck on the head by the murderer and the gun placed by her hand? Then all memory blacked out by shock."

"It was the dead man's own gun taken from his own desk in the house." The Sergeant shook his head.

"That complicates things, I'll admit," Baldwin agreed. "But it is still possible; she might have seen the gun on the floor and picked it up."

The Sergeant smiled. "Anything is possible. But you'd hardly fancy that andiron as a weapon; it is pretty awkward to handle."

"Yes," Baldwin admitted, "and it does strain the credulity somewhat to have the girl walk in her sleep the very night the murder is planned by someone else. Yet," he stopped and rubbed his chin, "I think we better see the girl's lawyer."

FRANK BRONSON, the lawyer, was crowding sixty. "I don't know," he shook his head when Baldwin suggested the girl's innocence; that she was attacked at the scene of the crime. "It is a lot for a jury to swallow. Alice Farrington *did* row with her father about her marriage. He *did* threaten to change his will," and spreading his hands far apart, "Again, if we discard the sleepwalking, we have her visiting her father at two in the morning in her pajamas and barefooted. It was a fairly cold night. No, I hate to throw over that sleepwalking defense."

"You think she killed him then?" Baldwin asked.

"I feel about it exactly as my client feels about it." Bronson stiffened somewhat. "I don't know." He leaned forward. "I'll tell you this, gentlemen. Do it or not do it, the uncertainty is driving her mad; I can hardly get a coherent word out of her. I appreciate your interest, Corey, bringing Mr. Scott on to aid her." He burst out suddenly, "How can we place Alice Farrington at the crime—*innocently* at the scene of the crime? That's what is bothering me."

Doctor Johns, the coroner, had spent his life in Palm Springs. He was a rotund, sharp-eyed, little man of about the lawyer's age. He had been the Farringtons' local physician for many years.

"People," he said, "have done strange things in their sleep; I wouldn't venture an opinion one way or another. What goes on inside the mind I don't pretend to know. Yes—I knew she walked in her sleep—but I understood she was outgrowing it."

"If she was growing out of it, Doctor, would there be any reason for her walking—on that particular night?" Baldwin wanted to know.

"A disturbance, a sort of mental upheaval, I suppose would cause it."

"Such as an argument—a violent argument with her father?"

"It could, conceivably, it could—yes."

Mrs. Dolores Farrington proved to be our expected blonde—but not the sylph-like creature we had thought. Five years of marriage had not aged her, but had fattened her considerably. Her painted face was round and marshmellowy, though more than a hint of former beauty remained. She fluttered a bit, and cried a bit—and tried to be helpful. Only occasionally did the shrewdness creep in, and that was when Baldwin spoke of money.

"Someone has to have the money," she said, "and I'm sure Benjamin intended to leave it to me; he died before he could. He thought I was too liberal; he never understood my brother, Paul. Benjamin said money had nothing to do with happiness but that was because he never knew the need of money; he always had nice things, never just wanted them. That poor child, Alice—she resented me, as if I were trying to take the place of her own dead mother."

"And her marriage?" Baldwin asked. "Were you against that, too?"

"I pretended to be," she leaned forward and spoke with the air of a conspirator. "I pretended to agree with Benjamin; he expected that of me—but really I thought it was kind of cute. Nice boy, Robert. Benjamin wanted college and family and—and—" she thought a moment, "background he called it. But killing her own father—" she took out a bit of lace and daubed at dry eyes. "It is too terrible; I can't believe it."

"You knew that Alice walked in her sleep?" Baldwin questioned.

"Yes, yes," she nodded. "When she was a little girl, I was told, they used to put chairs up against the bedroom door. I wish they still had."

"Did you ever see her walk?" Baldwin asked suddenly.

"See her?" Dolores Farrington seemed surprised and then, "Yes—I

did—" and when Baldwin waited, "Yes—I did see her."

"When?"

"When—well now—since we came down here. A month, two months ago. I saw her twice. That's right. Twice."

When we had left the house and were going toward the gate, I whispered to Baldwin: "She was lying. She never saw that girl walk in her sleep."

"Fairly obvious," Baldwin agreed. "I'm afraid, though, we can draw no conclusion from that. If she is believed at a trial, it will aid Alice if the defense is sleepwalking. So it may be simply her kind heart—for she is that type of female who would be indifferent to a bit of perjury."

3

THE MAN caught up to us before we reached my car. A fine, handsome man of thirty-five, in white flannels and a multi-colored shirt. This was the brother, Paul Strout.

"So this is the great mental detective—Baldwin Scott." Strout managed to grasp both of us by the hand. "You know," he said, "I don't believe Alice did it—asleep or awake; there must be some other explanation."

"Can you suggest one, Mr. Strout?" Baldwin asked.

"I can suggest a hundred, more conceivable, than a lovely girl like Alice killing her own father," and his smile going and his face drawing up. "She couldn't have done such a thing in her sleep, could she? It's impossible, isn't it?"

"Not impossible—no," Baldwin said as he looked over the strong, muscular six feet of handsome bronze. Then he asked suddenly, "You didn't hear the shot?"

"No—no one heard the shot; no one could. Benny liked to play with his book on banking out in the guest-house. Spent nights there lately. Didn't like to disturb Dolly."

I smiled to myself as I recalled the somber, aristocratic Benjamin Farrington, and wondered if Paul ever had called him Benny to his face.

Baldwin didn't get much chance to question him. Strout threw his own questions so fast. Had Baldwin seen Alice? What did he think? Was a mental detective something like a psychiatrist? Couldn't a tramp have done it? Finally Baldwin got in one question. Was Paul on good terms with the dead Farrington?

"As good as anyone ever was," Paul Strout laughed. "He was hinting that I should leave the house ever since I came here; said I drank too much and gambled too much. He was about to drive his own daughter out. He crabbed at Dolly about the amount of money she spent. You don't want to believe those stories about Dolly."

"We'll try not to," Baldwin said as if he knew all about it. "Which story were you referring to?"

"Good Lord! Is there more than one?" Paul Strout seemed genuinely surprised and then in admiration, "Dolly is a smart one; we're not too conventional, you know. Benny was all for the conventions—in Palm Springs, of all places. No harm in it, understand. Dolly never was interested in men—as men; she just liked a good time. Crazy about dancing. Why, Frankie de Carlos was little more than a hired dancing-partner. Between you and me, I stayed around and put up with Benny because of Dolly."

There was one more question, and Baldwin finally got it in. He wanted to know if Paul Strout ever saw Alice Farrington walk in her sleep.

"Good Lord, no," Paul Strout said, then he puckered up his lips and half-closed his eyes. "I think I heard talk that she *used* to walk in her sleep,

though. I suppose she could have again. I never saw her walk—never even thought of it until—well, the story of how the murder happened."

WE HEARD about Frankie de Carlos from Robert Morse. With Morse, our reception was enthusiastic and sincere. I had already told the boy that I was bringing Baldwin Scott over to help Alice.

Robert Morse was both indignant and alarmed that he wasn't allowed to see Alice. "Why talk about being innocent until you are proved guilty? She might die in that hospital for all they care. Mrs. Farrington and de Carlos? Honestly, I don't think there was any harm in it, and I don't think Mr. Farrington knew about it. I know Alice never told him. Dolly danced—" he reddened slightly, "Mrs. Farrington insisted I call her Dolly; everyone did. She never seemed like Alice's stepmother—not a bad scout at all," Morse said.

"Alice disliked her stepmother?"

"Resented her—not disliked her; no one could really dislike Mrs. Farrington. That was the only disagreement Alice and I had. I still think I was right—but I can see why Alice didn't like it."

"Right about what?" Baldwin wanted to know.

"I told Alice she had no more right interfering with her father's marriage than he had to interfere with hers. Sure, Alice admitted I was right; Alice was always honest that way—but she didn't like it all the same." He grinned, then, and it was a boyish grin—not the sophisticated grin of Paul Strout, nor, later, the smirking grin of Frankie de Carlos.

Morse's trouble seemed to be fear for the sanity of Alice Farrington. He believed whole-heartedly in her innocence. He told us: "She couldn't have done it, asleep or awake. It isn't in Alice to harm anyone—to hurt anyone."

I thought Baldwin would want to see Alice Farrington, but he wanted to meet up with Frankie de Carlos.

"My Aunt Cornelia," I said, "was very anxious for you to see the girl. She says Alice's strongest defense is Alice herself."

"I know," he told me. "My interest in the case, so far, has been purely academic. But I am getting the feel of the Farrington household; de Carlos probably plays no part in our little drama, but his name has been shoved into the cast—and I want a look at him."

We ran down Frankie de Carlos in a sidewalk cafe. A little Latin, a little smooth, a little oily—and altogether shifty. But he was nervous and was careful to call Dolores, Mrs. Farrington, without any slips.

"Very tragic—very sad," he laid it on. "A fine gentleman, Mr. Farrington—a very devoted couple. Mrs. Farrington was very talented, you know, and wished to keep up with her dancing, and if I may say so—" he paused, smirked a bit, then talked on and on.

He didn't say so exactly, but he left us with the impression that Dolores Farrington was more or less a client, and that her husband approved most heartily of their dancing. Since Baldwin was not acting in any official capacity, he didn't question the man or ask where he was at the time of the crime—just got the feel of him, as he called it.

"He's lying a lot," I said, when we left him.

"Probably," Baldwin smiled. "His kind has a lot to lie about; he was quite capable of talking a lot and saying nothing."

"But, is he a killer?"

"Oh, yes," Baldwin nodded. "I'd say he was a killer, all right—but the stakes would have to be very high, the situation desperate, and his chances of getting away with it absolutely assured."

"Tough, if true," I couldn't help but

say; "Palm Springs is full of such characters in the season."

"Potential murderers, all of them," Baldwin smiled. "But the condition which would provoke them to murder, would be difficult to find—so I don't believe you need fear any sudden outburst of violence."

"Have you any reason to think one of those people we just talked to killed Benjamin Farrington, and Alice is not—"

"Easy does it, Corey," he cut in on me with a laugh. "I am simply getting the feel of the people who are most interested and in some way must have effected Alice Farrington. My mind is open to receive impressions. Intuition and instinct and hunches are spontaneous impressions, but reason is thought, and thought is a concentration, and concentration demands time and solitude." He looked at his watch then. "I'd like to see the girl now," he said abruptly.

4

THE HOSPITAL was a low rambling building covering plenty of ground. I had no trouble getting Baldwin in to see the girl. Alice Farrington was sitting up in bed. She may have been young and beautiful, but she didn't look either, now. Though her hair was brushed back making the livid mark, where she had fallen against the andiron, stand out, and her robe was a gay yellow, her face was white and lined and her lips pale. Her eyes with the deep darkness under them were troubled and frightened.

Baldwin was assuring and soothing. He sat down on the side of the bed and took her hand. It was plainly trembling. "Not sleeping too well?" he smiled down at her.

"It is impossible to sleep much," she said. "Are you a doctor?"

"No," Baldwin shook his head, "though tonight you might call me a doctor of the mind—your mind. We are here, Alice, to find out the truth from you, you walk in your sleep?"

"Very seldom lately," she said slowly and then added hurriedly, "But I do—I must have, you know, to be where I was and not in bed." She avoided all mention of her father, but her slender body shook and her sunken eyes grew wide. She seemed to have trouble in following what was said.

Baldwin talked to her then about her childhood and when she first began to walk in her sleep. He said he had heard that the slightest sound often awakened sleepwalkers, and that was why people never shouted at them if they were on window ledges or other dangerous places. It was as if he was simply trying to make conversation and put her at her ease about sleepwalking. I didn't see any point in his rambling at first; but there was a point and he built up to it.

"I don't know about others," Alice told him after an effort. "But I always woke up if anything happened—I mean, before I'd fall or get in a dangerous place. I remember once I was on the diving-board of the pool, and there was no water in the pool—but I woke up before I dove in. I never do anything foolish; I always protect myself before—oh!" She stopped, startled, and ran a hand quickly up over her mouth.

Baldwin did not seem to notice the break. He came in quickly, talking in a light conversational tone about an imaginary niece who walked in her sleep, but always knew it the next morning.

"I could hardly believe her," he said. "I thought she made it up—always knowing, I mean. She couldn't explain. Said she sort of felt it. That was rather silly; don't you think so?"

"No, no," Alice was looking toward the window where I stood. "You *do*

feel it and—" she paused and swung her eyes back to him.

He didn't give her a chance to see where he was leading her. He broke in quickly. "Did Mrs. Farrington, your stepmother, ever see you walk in your sleep?"

"Oh, no," she answered quickly. "She never did."

"But if you were asleep, how would you know?"

"I wake up when I meet people." and with what might have been meant for a smile, "Besides, she would have screamed; she's like that."

"You always wake up then—when people are about? Why do you suppose that is?"

"I don't know about others who sleepwalk," she said. "With me, I guess it's a sort of protection. Afraid I'll say or do something," and going on as if she had been studying herself and this strange phenomena. "Generally I avoid people in my sleep as I would if I was awake and wanted to avoid them. Sometimes it's like a dream that you can remember in the morning; often I can force what happened back into my mind."

"And you *know* you have been walking?" and when she nodded, he went on quickly. "Paul Strout, now; did he know you walked in your sleep?"

"Oh, yes," for a moment she seemed to have forgotten the tragedy, for she smiled. "He saw me the last time I walked—about five weeks ago. I was going down the stairs and he was coming up. He had been out and had been drinking, though he was far from drunk. The clock was striking three."

"Did you wake up?"

"Yes— I always wake up when I meet anyone. I was embarrassed and pretended I was still asleep, and went back to my room. Paul simply stood there on the stairs gaping at me as if he saw a ghost," and the smile going and with a faraway note in her voice, "I haven't walked since."

"You'd know if you did?"

"Why, yes—" it was as if she wasn't paying attention.

And Baldwin suddenly hammering in the words, "Then you didn't walk in your sleep that night your father died," and as wide terror-filled eyes turned up, "If you did walk, you'd know it; you would, wouldn't you? You said you would. So you were awake when you went to the guest-house. What happened there? Who are you protecting? Who—"

"No, no, no," she jerked erect in the bed, her eyes wild, her hands clutching at her throat—her voice raised. "I must have walked. You hear me. I walked— I did walk that night. I—I— Tell me, tell me you don't believe I killed him—not my father. You can't believe it! Why do you torture me— Tell me, tell me. What do you know? What do they know? What—what— I tell you I don't know what happened."

THE DOOR flew open and the nurse ran in. Baldwin joined me by the window. We stood looking down at the seven-foot drop to the lawn below. The nurse was quieting the girl. Alice's sobs came across the room. I half-turned and saw the uniformed police officer in the open doorway. He was running a hand over his forehead and looking from Baldwin to the bed and back to Baldwin again.

"I think," Baldwin took my arm, "we had better be going," and as we passed the policeman and went down the hall, "Extraordinary, Corey. Very bad—very bad indeed."

"You think she didn't walk in her sleep at all. That she went there and— and—" I stopped and then, "Did she kill her father, Baldwin?"

"How would I know?" he snapped. "I'm not clairvoyant. You heard her as well as I did; everything she said," and when we turned out onto the street, "Forgive me, Corey. I have seldom been so much disturbed."

"I can see that," I said somewhat gruffly, and then putting a hand on his shoulder, "I want none of this old mental hokus-pokus; you think she could have killed him?"

"Of course she could," he said at once. "Yet—did you see her face? Did you see her eyes? A girl like that—murdering her own father—asleep or awake; I agree with Robert Morse, that it is impossible. That is my instinct. And yet—did I carry *her* along the path of deception, about walking in her sleep, or did she really lead *me?* Was she troubled, and uncertain, and frightened, and hardly aware of what had happened and oblivious of the implications of my questions? Or, was she shrewd and clever?"

"What do you mean? She was just a frightened, confused child."

"Was she? All my intuition, every instinct, tells me that she was. But what of reason? Reason flashes the warning that she did not walk in her sleep that night. And if she did not walk in her sleep, she knows what happened in that guest-house. If she knows what happened, then she is keeping quiet for one of two reasons."

"Two reasons?" I asked.

"Of course; she either killed her father or knows who did kill him."

"But who would she protect?"

To that question I got no answer.

BALDWIN was very quiet at dinner and all through the evening. He ate little and drank nothing at all. Up in our rooms, afterward, he paced back and forth. Suddenly, he swung and faced me, his feet far apart, his hands deep in pants pockets. "Well, Corey." he demanded, "am I being a bit of a fool?"

"She must have killed him; it is hard to believe—but you do believe it."

He stood looking at me for a full minute, then he turned, and going into the bedroom, began to toss his things into a suitcase.

"Of course she killed him," he said. "Nothing else would explain her presence in the guest-house at that time of the morning—and dressed as she was—unless she is protecting the murderer. So that's that. I'll get out of here and go back East and you'll explain that I was called away—"

He broke off; tossed his suitcase across the room and went back into our sitting room. "This suite," he smiled sort of weakly, "is costing me forty dollars a day. I intend to use it. Go to bed, Corey; I'll sit here and think. I can't believe she—she did it. I simply can't."

"You'll try to make reason deny your instinct."

"No, no," he threw himself in the big easy chair under the light. "I have no duty to the State to convict the girl; nor have I any desire to defeat justice. But, like Robert Morse, I can't believe she killed her father. No, Corey, I will not try to reason away my instinct—but try and make reason meet instinct, and agree with it. Failing in that, I'll—I'll chuck it up."

His head went deep in his hands. I left him and went to bed. At two o'clock he was still sitting there. I looked at the ash tray beside him—it was devoid of cigaret butts, so I knew that he was thinking—concentrating—for he often said: "Smoking is for planning when concentration has given you something to plan after your problem is resolved."

I awoke at a little after three and again at ten minutes of five and went to the living room door and peered in. Baldwin had not moved; there were no cigaret stubs in the ash tray. I knew that reason and instinct had not met. I felt that they would not meet. For, certainly, if the girl had not walked to that guest-house in her sleep, she

had walked there awake. And—if she had—she must have killed her father, or—know who killed him.

I looked in again at ten minutes of seven. The venetian blinds were raised and dawn was breaking right in the room. The ash tray was full and cigaret butts were scattered about the floor. Baldwin was leaning back in the chair, with his feet stretched out. There was a cigaret in his mouth and the room reeked of tobacco.

"Come in, Corey," he either heard me or sensed my presence. "Come in and take a look at an idiot child—" and with a laugh, "or let us hope an ex-idiot child. Don't stare at me like that; reason and instinct have met and reached an agreement."

He wouldn't tell me more.

"Why should I?" he demanded. "You saw everything I saw, heard everything I heard, and what did you do about it? You laid down the book and went to bed while I went on with the story. No. Corey, you are my reader and I want to carry you along with me until the end." He came to his feet then, smoothed the wrinkles out of his trousers. "Now, I must visit the guest-house and the room where the murder took place."

5

SERGEANT Randolph accompanied us to the death room in the Farrington guest-house. It was a large comfortable room with several easy chairs, a long, low couch, shelves of books on economics, the flat desk and chair in which Benjamin Farrington met his death. And, of course, the fireplace with the andirons on either side of it—and a shovel, tongs and poker of wrought iron with heavy brass knobs similar to those on the andirons.

Baldwin picked up an andiron with some difficulty and unsuccessfully tried to wield it about in his right hand—then both hands. "Not much of a weapon," he said. He examined the shovel, the tongs and the poker. Turning to the Sergeant, he asked, "There was blood—hair, perhaps, on the brass head of the andiron?"

"No," the Sergeant was emphatic. "No hair, no blood. Alice Farrington fell and struck the frontal occipital—" he stopped and grinned sheepishly. "She hit herself on the temple, almost in the center of the forehead. Quite a bruise, quite a crack, but no blood. Doctor Johns fitted the brass knob of the andiron to the abrasion."

In answer to Baldwin's question about fingerprints, Sergeant Randolph said: "As a matter of routine, fingerprints were looked for; but only the girl's and her father's showed up." He added significantly, "Hers were on the gun—the murder gun. If you were thinking of that andiron as a weapon—put it out of your head. You see yourself how awkward, if not impossible, it is to handle. Again, the girl was here in her night clothes," and with a shake of his head, "I wish you could drum up something, sir. I've known her since she was a small child, a grand kid and a grander young woman." There was no doubt of the sincerity in the officer's voice.

Baldwin said: "By the way, Sergeant, did you take my tip of early this morning and locate Frankie de Carlos?"

"I did," Sergeant Randolph nodded. "The same as the others. He was home in bed the night of the murder, or so he said—which is not generally his way at two o'clock in the morning. I can't see anything there. Flighty Mrs. Farrington was fluttery, too, but no harm in her. There isn't much goes on in this town we don't hear about."

"Listen, Corey," Baldwin threw a jar into me when we were back at the hotel, "I've got to see Alice Farrington again—must have a word with her."

"Good Lord," I gasped. "After yesterday. They won't let you within a city block of her. Why—"

"This time," he cut in on me, "it quite evidently must be unlawful entry. Her hospital window is only a few feet above the ground. There are no bars on it and no guard outside it. After all, she isn't charged with murder yet, and you can give me a boost up to her window."

"You can't, Baldwin. You can't—"

"I can, and I will. What of that young girl? Her sanity, if not her life, is in danger; you must have seen that. I must and will see her alone tonight."

"She knows—who killed her father?"

"Well—" he hesitated, "she'll know once I refresh her memory."

"If she knows, who would she protect?"

"Ah—who indeed?" he smiled at me.

Baldwin had his way though I had thoughts which were both unpleasant and confusing. That his sudden appearance in her room in the night would frighten her half to death he dismissed. That she would cry out and we'd both land in jail—he ridiculed.

"You'll give me a lift. I'll be at her bed and have a hand clapped over her mouth before she can utter a sound. Then I'll talk—and she will listen. And if she's half the girl I think she is, I'll save her life and her sanity." He paused for a long moment, "And I hope—no, I feel sure she'll name our murderer for us."

What could I do against such an argument, such a promise?

THE ANSWER was that two o'clock in the morning found me crouched beside Baldwin and close against the hospital wall. I gave thanks that there was no moon.

Five minutes later, I gave Baldwin a hand up to the girl's window as if I had been in the business of housebreaking all my life. I heard him raise the window, then a foot left my shoulder—another, and he was over the sill and in the room. A long wait, it seemed. Yet, it wasn't over ten or twelve minutes. All quiet, not a sound. No watchman paced the grounds. I waited.

It came. A sudden pounding in that room above me. A banging upon wood. My first impulse was to run for it. My next to jump to that window to aid Baldwin. Then his long slender body came hurtling through that window.

"This way, Corey," Baldwin whispered, pulling me back close to the building. "If we run, the officer will look out and see us. Ah—there's a light in the room—and a figure at the window."

"He'll give the alarm," I whispered hoarsely.

"There will be no alarm," he told me; "I'm afraid poor Alice is in for a rough time of it though. I put a chair under the knob of the door and pushed the dresser against it. Not much of a barrier, but enough for me to make my exit unseen and unheard."

"But the girl, Alice—won't they get the truth out of her—that you were there?"

"No—" he shook his head as we dropped over the hospital wall. "They'll get nothing out of her if she's half the actress you told me she was. She'll simply say she was afraid that the murderer of her father might come for her—so she barricaded the door. You did say she was a fine actress—that's important."

"Oh, yes," I assured him on that point. "A real dramatic one. You learned what you wanted?"

"You might put it," he grinned at me very much pleased with himself, "that she learned what I wanted; I think, Corey, that would be phrasing it better and more honestly."

We were back in our suite at the hotel when he told me his plan.

"Like the books, Corey," he said. "Like the detective of fiction, we will assemble at the scene of the crime. It is for you to see that the district attorney supplies our actors and sets the stage."

I DROVE up to Riverside that afternoon and saw the district attorney. Haviland Fitzgerald listened to me, said that Doctor Johns had found Alice Farrington greatly improved and finally agreed to Baldwin's suggestion for that night.

To be sure, it wasn't as easy as I make it sound. But the truth was that the district attorney didn't like the case. There certainly was no glory, and no political future, in convicting a charming young girl of the Palm Springs and Beverly Hills younger set of killing her own father.

Fitzgerald tried to question me, but I knew nothing—except that Baldwin told me that if the district attorney would agree to the gathering that evening, he would "explain the murder." And I told the D. A. that the explanation would remove him from a most unpleasant situation, which he may have thought meant a plea of killing while asleep.

The gathering in the little guesthouse—little only by comparison with the main Farrington residence—took place in the murder room shortly after eight thirty that evening. Half a dozen comfortable chairs were now supplemented with several straight backed ones. That was the first time I had seen the butler, Simms, though I knew that Baldwin had talked to him that afternoon while I was up at Riverside. It was really a pleasant room—the open fire crackling almost festively, for the desert nights are cold.

Of those present, I think Alice Farrington struck me most forcibly. Perhaps because of the change in her. The shadows were still beneath her eyes, but the eyes themselves were bright, and the bruise on her forehead partly hidden by her hair. The light in those eyes was for Robert Morse, though she would look at Baldwin long and steadily.

Fitzgerald, the district attorney, standing very erect, his arms folded over his chest, the smile on his face a planted one that, by a slight twist of the lips and a movement of the eyelids, could swing to a friendly appreciative one, or to a skeptical, doubtful, even accusing one. He was a good politician. Ready to take credit or disclaim responsibility.

Paul Strout, friendly and talkative and moving about the room. Sergeant Randolph, stolid and reassuring, by the door to the hall with Simms, the butler, beside him. Doctor Johns, with quite frankly a depreciating grin as if he was about to say, "Well, well—children at play."

Robert Morse trying to edge his chair nearer Alice Farrington behind whom the D. A. stood. If Morse's assurance was forced, he made a good job of hiding it; just his glance first of hope, then of doubt, toward Baldwin.

Bronson, the lawyer, wore a completely blank expression. Come what may, he was plainly on record as having no hand in it. And Frankie de Carlos; I suppose he was the last one I should suspect of murder if I was to go by the books, for certainly he created the impression of guilt; his eyes shifty, his feet moving as he lounged in a huge chair attempting to appear at ease and failing miserably.

Dolores Farrington made no pretense of being a bereaved widow, nor solicited any sympathy. She was open-

ly excited at the proceedings and picking Baldwin as the center of things, followed his every movement.

If Baldwin felt his importance, he did not show it. He winked over at me and I knew we were in for a bit of his mental hokus-pokus. With his back to the closed French windows that gave on the patio, he went into his act.

HE STARTED, "It is not my purpose to mystify you," which was a good lie to begin with. "Nor do I claim any mental gymnastics as some newspapers would have it. I have made a study, a long and arduous, and I feel a fruitful one, of the human mind. Here—in this room," his voice hushed, "took place a vicious and a cleverly planned murder. Even you people who took no part in the events of that terrible morning can feel here the horror of that moment."

He paused, looked directly at Dolores Farrington, the widow, and it worked. She shivered visibly. Alice Farrington paled slightly, and the butler, Simms, who stood by Sergeant Randolph, ran his hand under his stiff collar.

Baldwin went on. "You may understand then, the feeling, the inner turmoil of those who were here that night, either after the murder—or the one who was here—the one who was here alone—to kill. But the greatest horror came to Alice, who regained consciousness to find Simms, the butler, bending over her and her father dead. Is it any wonder that her mind went blank, and all that was horrible and unbelievable was wiped from her conscious knowledge?

"The human mind can carry only so much shock, and Alice had plenty that night. From the time she went to bed until the very moment she awoke to look upon the face—" Baldwin waited then and I expected, as the others expected, him to say the face of her dead father. But he didn't. He said, "upon the face of a murderer. For Alice Farrington did not kill her father.

"Now—I wish to make no mystery of my work, claim no credit for the knowledge I have gained by examining the minds of others, for there is nothing buried in the mind that cannot be recalled; and this room of death, of murder, is the place to recall it. Alice," he turned to the girl, "take yourself back to that night—that awful night. You have retired—and fallen asleep."

All eyes were on Alice Farrington as she turned her head and looked at Baldwin. Had the expression changed on her face? Had the expression changed in her eyes? I thought it had. A slight mist over the brightness.

"Alice," Baldwin said, "close your eyes," and as her eyes closed, "Think hard. It comes back to you now. You went to bed. You went to sleep. Did you stay asleep?"

"No—no," Alice said in a low, tense voice, "I didn't. I remember now. I woke up. My bedroom door was opening. Someone was coming into my room. I thought at first it was Dolores. But it wasn't—no, it wasn't. It

was—" her body stiffened. "It is a man. I see the sudden flash of light, the moving object in his hand. It is a small poker with a brass knob on the end of it. It is raised. It is coming down. I—I see the face of the man plainly. Then—then, he struck me!"

"Yes—" Baldwin encouraged when she hesitated and her voice broke. "You know that face?"

"Yes—" Alice Farrington fairly shrieked. Her eyes popped open. She turned her head, raised her arm and pointed a finger. "There. There is the man who struck me. Paul—Paul Strout."

A shout of warning from Baldwin. A scream from Dolores Farrington. A curse from Paul Strout. Then Strout dashed toward the door and saw Sergeant Randolph. He spun quickly and lunged toward Baldwin, who barred his way to the French windows.

6

PAUL STROUT hurled himself at Baldwin while the others, even the Sergeant, stood as if ironed to the floor. Baldwin stepped aside, and as Paul Strout plunged by him, put out his foot. Strout stumbled, attempted to regain his balance, and crashed into the French windows.

A confession was hardly needed from Paul Strout after his panic. But it came later.

"You see," Baldwin pointed out to the law, Doctor Johns, and the lawyer, "Paul Strout knew Alice walked in her sleep; he knew because he saw her walk. He knew, too, that Benjamin Farrington was through with him and that there would be no more money in that direction. Farrington would see to that. With Farrington dead, Paul knew his sister would have a good income and he could chisel money out of her. He knew, too—and that idea, no doubt, came to him when he first saw Alice walk in her sleep—that if Alice was found guilty of the murder, she could not inherit the money. The bulk of the estate would go to his sister. How or when he heard of a contemplated change in the will, I don't know. Benjamin Farrington spoke of it; everyone seemed to know about it. So Benjamin Farrington must die before he could change that will—and have the larger income that his wife would receive go to charity."

"You don't think," the D. A. asked, "that Dolores Farrington had anything to do with it?"

"On the contrary. I am convinced that she knew absolutely nothing about it. Paul Strout went to the guest-house; he shot Benjamin Farrington. He took the poker from the fireplace and, returning to the main house, entered Alice's room—but had no idea she awoke and saw him. He struck her; carried her unconscious body to the guest-house; then pressed the gun into her hand, causing the fingerprints. He then tipped over one of the andirons, the brass head of which corresponds exactly with the brass head of the poker. He replaced the poker. If Paul Strout carefully wiped away all fingerprints or wore gloves, I imagine he will tell you now. A final look around, the press of the bell summoning Simms, the butler, before Alice regained consciousness, and Strout faded into the night, back to his room and to his bed to appear later when the alarm was given."

When we two were back in our hotel suite, I asked Baldwin, "What of Dolores, the widow? She lied about Alice—seeing her walk in her sleep. Why did she do that?"

"Good hearted, I imagine," Baldwin shrugged. "Paul Strout lied about not seeing Alice walk, because he evi-

dently didn't want any suspicions directed to him. He preferred to appear ignorant of her sleepwalking." And his head jerking up, "By jove, do you know, I think we'll find out that Paul suggested that his sister tell us that she had seen Alice sleepwalking. For it was to his interest to establish the sleepwalking—but not to his interest to know too much about it. At least, that is the way he figured and that figuring tripped him, for I wondered why he lied to us."

"I think," I shook my head, "you had luck that Alice opened her eyes and saw Paul before he struck her."

"You think so," he smiled.

"And I can't understand how you got that information out of her the second time and not the first time. Yes—it seemed a lot of luck."

BALDWIN shook his head. "No luck at all. You see, Corey, that information wasn't in her head to get out—neither the first time nor the second time that I saw her." And when I stared blankly at him, "I put it into her head.

"When I entered her room at two o'clock this morning, I told her that I knew Paul Strout had killed her father. And I told her, too, why she couldn't recall that she walked in her sleep; because she hadn't walked. I told her that Paul Strout must have come to her room, knocked her unconscious, and then carried her to the guest-house. I told her that he must have struck her with the poker, as the andiron was too difficult a weapon to handle—and the poker was the most natural one. I told her I knew all that, but she would have to help me prove it. Understand?"

"Understand?" I was still a bit flabbergasted.

"Of course, I outlined my plan to her in the few minutes I had. You said she was a good actress; she had simply to show that acting when she said she saw Paul Strout enter her room and strike her."

"You mean you made it all up to—to trap Paul Strout? That Alice didn't see him? But how—how did you know it happened that way?"

"No luck. It was planned like the books. It was the result of reason meeting instinct. If Alice didn't walk in her sleep, and didn't walk to the guest-house awake, then she was carried there.

"As simple as that, yet, I didn't see it; you didn't see it; the authorities didn't see it. Perhaps as did the others, I found the andiron awkward to carry, let alone wield as a weapon. But tongs and shovel and poker are a part of the equipment of a fireplace. Now suppose these implements had the same brass head or knob as the andirons? So our visit to the murder room and the confirmation of my thoughts that long night in our hotel room. It was simple for Paul Strout to create the illusion that she struck her head on the heavy, unwielding andiron."

"But why Paul Strout? Why not Dolores, or de Carlos? Even an outsider."

"What, an outsider enter the house, take the gun—kill Farrington; then return to the house, knock Alice unconscious and carry her from her room? That would be too much, Corey. I did not believe that Dolores had the strength for it; nor did she have the mind to conceive and execute such a crime. Frankie de Carlos? But you told me that the will cuts off the widow's income if she remarries. I'll admit that Frankie de Carlos might kill for money—but not for love—and, certainly not for marriage without money. We had but one person left—Paul Strout."

"I see. But weren't you taking a chance?"

BALDWIN smiled. "Hardly; Paul Strout would profit most by Far-

rington's death. A roof over his head, and change in his pocket—both of which he was in danger of losing. If Alice Farrington was suspected of the murder, it would not only divert suspicion from him—but protect him from actual arrest. If she was convicted, it would put big money into his pocket in place of small change since the widow, his sister, would have a much larger income.

"Paul Strout pointed the finger of suspicion at himself when he lied about not seeing Alice Farrington walk in her sleep; Alice Farrington directed the finger toward him when she told us she met Paul while walking in her sleep. Tonight, Alice made others believe she saw Paul strike her."

"It was a good job of acting."

"Yes, it was. It was very real to everyone in that room; but doubly real, even terrifying, to the one person who knew it was the truth—Paul Strout."

"Yes—it had to be Paul Strout," I agreed, "if it wasn't Alice."

"Of course it did. I said to myself that long night, 'If Alice is eliminated from the picture, then what? If Alice was not found beside the body of her dead father, who would be suspected? Paul Strout.' If that was true, then why was the unconscious Alice there? And reason answered; 'To save Paul Strout.' For Paul Strout was the one person who needed suspicion diverted from himself. Just as the authorities were sure it was Alice who killed, because she was found there and was known to walk in her sleep, so would they have been sure it was Paul Strout who killed, if she was not found there.

"From then on it was simple. If Alice did not walk there, either asleep or awake, she must have been carried; and the murderer must have carried her. No, I wasn't guessing, Corey. Instinct and reason had met—and the murder was solved."

"And the little scene at the guesthouse?"

"Like the books," he laughed. "Knowledge is not evidence, and I had to make Paul Strout convict himself. I had to direct the murderer's movements to fit my plan."

★

A THRILLING MYSTERY NOVEL

In the private peeper business, a guy gets used to a lot of pretty raw stuff. But there's a point where somebody goes too far, and that's when I see red. And when they snatched Danny Dreamer out of his wheelchair, that was it, for me. This wasn't business, any longer; I knew then that I'd get Mr. Big, even if it was the last thing I did!

don't miss

LOWER MY COFFIN

by Don DeBoe

in the current issue of **FAMOUS DETECTIVE STORIES**

A CASE OF IMMUNITY

Isn't a perfect alibi worth a year in jail? Sanders figured that such a price wasn't too high.

by Francis C. Battle

THE CAR RADIO crackled, and a woman's voice came over the high frequency police band. The voice, in code, dispatched car 97 to Normandie and Santa Monica Streets where a brawl was in progress.

The man listening to the radio glanced at the clock on the dashboard. The luminous hands told him it was the second hour of the morning. He had been waiting one hour and twelve minutes now.

"Damn!" the man swore.

He was thirty-six, with the gray beginning at the temples. His features were well-defined; the chin, straight and dominate, told those who knew Carl Sanders that they were not wrong in assuming that here was a man who got what he wanted.

The inadequate ashtray in the car was full and the man threw his half-smoked cigaret out the window.

Five minutes of silence had passed since he last heard the voice. Five minutes and he had felt every second, every fraction. How much longer must he wait? In a city like Los Angeles it happened every night, almost every hour. He had selected tonight, Saturday, because it would be the most likely night.

Another minute went by. The man opened a fresh pack of cigarets. One hour and eighteen minutes now; why didn't it happen?

The voice sent a chill through his body. Again in code. No, this wasn't it. A fire on Selma and Vine.

He had been so careful, even to the most insignificant detail, but all his planning would be futile unless the right call came through soon. If it didn't, there wouldn't be a chance for him to escape—

The call came through! His call!

Robbery in Beverly Hills. He was in luck. He could be there in five minutes.

Quickly, he set the car in motion and sped down Melrose Avenue into Beverly Hills. A patrol car was already there; an elderly couple were standing in night clothes on the porch talking to two policemen.

He parked his car several blocks away and made a vigilance in the shadows. The routine investigation took less time than he thought it would. When the police left, he approached the house circumspectly. Again he waited patiently until the lights went out. Then he carefully walked around the house and executed each detail that was necessary.

When he had finished, he went home. He went to sleep, exhausted. The worry, the anxiety, had taken all his strength.

HE REALLY expected the police that morning. They did not come; he began to doubt their efficiency.

In the afternoon, they came to his restaurant. He was so pleased that it was difficult portraying his proposed role. He answered each question as evasively as he could. He tripped himself and the police until he finally broke into hysteria and confessed to the robbery.

"Why?" the lieutenant asked.

"I needed the money," he said hoarsely.

"You must have been drunk. The old people didn't have any money; you took eighteen dollars. I still can't understand it," the lieutenant said. "You're a college graduate, a business man."

He turned painful eyes towards the lieutenant. "There are things you don't know about me," he whispered. "Things I won't explain, but they forced me to do this." Then in a tight voice, "I've confessed, what more do you want?"

The lieutenant did not require further evidence. A signed statement closed the case.

His luck held, even to the sentence. One year, with possible parole after six months.

They did come once about that *other* matter. He could offer no help. There was nothing he knew; he was very sorry. Yes, it was true the business was going badly, and he and his partner Giles were quite desperate. Perhaps Giles had made enemies. He really didn't know. Why, yes, it was strange that he was arrested for robbery the same night that Giles was killed. Coincidence, wasn't it?

The visit was short and he was sorry, in a way. He had nothing to fear; in the files was proof by the State that he, Carl Sanders, had committed a theft on such-and-such a date and at such-and-such a time. Upon this evidence it was really foolish to even attempt to connect him with the murder.

The police were sure of one thing. Carl Sanders *did* commit the theft; there was evidence to substantiate that. It was a crude attempt with clues all over the place. And so the murder was placed in the "Unsolved File" pending further investigation.

Seven months was a long time to wait, even for Carl Sanders, who utilized patience to a degree where the average man would balk. It would be worth it though, Carl thought; he could start all over again. He had learned by their previous mistakes. Instead of quitting when Giles wanted to, Carl begged him to continue, while he secretly stole funds for a new beginning. When he was caught, naturally, there was only one thing he could do. His actions had not been impromptu.

Now he was free. There was nothing to worry about. He had paid for his crime, spent his time.

He opened another restaurant and with much audacity, maintained the previous name of Sanders and Giles. He thought this appropriate, for it was

Giles' money he was using. There was only one thing that bothered him, the small thin-faced man who stood in front of his restaurant and watched the people go in and come out. A cop, he thought. He didn't look like a cop, but maybe why he didn't was the very reason why he was. Several times a week he would spend the day, just watching. But with a shrug, Carl dismissed the little man. They could investigate all they wanted to; the police could not touch him.

ONE NIGHT, when the customers had left and only a few of the personel were cleaning up, the little man walked into the restaurant. Carl didn't like his confident attitude. "I want to talk to you," the man said.

"What do you want?" Carl showed his annoyance.

"The matter concerns a man called Giles," the stranger told him.

"You're wasting my time," Carl said.

"I've been watching you," the man went on, "ever since you confessed to that robbery in Beverly Hills. I waited while you served your time, and I waited to see how your business turned out. Offhand, I'd say you can afford one hundred bucks a week for insurance."

"Insurance! What do I need insurance for?" Carl said. "The police can't touch me! I've got immunity!"

"Oh sure, sure. You're immune from the police—but not from me. When you confessed, I started thinking. Why would anyone want to take a small rap like that—unless he wanted to beat something big. I checked and adding up the score gives me only one answer. You see, I'm the guy who pulled that robbery!

"Now if you want to stay immune, you pay. Of course this hundred a week is flexible. The more you make, why—"

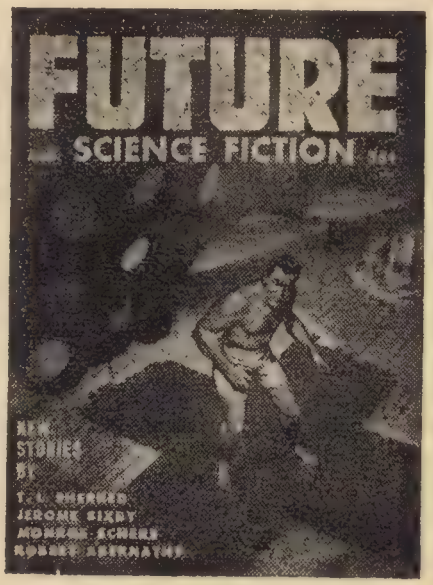
★

They were safe under the bubble, but the outside world was cut off completely. But what bothered Rosie was the mystery of where Tessie had gotten a new dress, when everyone else was in rags.

Here's a sly and sardonic novelet,

ROSIE LIVED IN A BUBBLE

by Monroe Schere



Look for the August issue of

FUTURE SCIENCE FICTION

IN SCARLET PASSING

NOVELET

by Mark Carrel

There was just one clue, one indication that Rex Holt might have bashed Moretti's skull in when he had both the opportunity and the inclination. The bashing didn't look like a left-hander's job, and Rex was a genuine southpaw.

GENERALLY speaking, it wasn't like Norma Whitman at all; at least like the Norma Whitman who had gone to Grangeville High a few years back. But then, Chicago wan't Grangeville, either, so maybe it was normal that Norma should change so much.

At any rate, Rex Holt was just short of flabbergasted when she walked into his office at the *Tribune*. He sat weakly at his desk and watched her come across the room. Norma had always been pretty in a dark, dazzling sort of way, but now—well, Norma had learned a lot since the days at Grangeville High. Now her brassieres fitted, if not any tighter, at least a whale of a lot better.

And there were the hips and the legs and the wide, slightly protruding, generous mouth and the deep blue eyes, almost violet in color. Well, anyway, Norma was constructed along lines that cause permanent high blood pressure and rubbery knees, and she knew it. Rex could see that as she dropped into the chair across from his desk with a big, genial smile. "Hi, Rex. It's sure swell to see someone from home."

He nodded thoughtfully. Being a junior reporter in Chicago wasn't any better than being water boy to the second string back in Grangeville. Still, in Chicago, a lad might get a little richer, maybe.

Anyway, Grangeville was just a memory now. A pleasant, homely memory, but just a memory—except when the letters came from the folks. Then it sometimes became nostalgical-

ly acute for a while. "Yeah. How'd you happen to stumble onto me, Norma?"

She wagged the dark chestnut hair and a sheen of light sparkled off it. That, Rex told himself, was some of that glitter women paid to have sprayed on their hair. A man trap, sort of. "I heard your name in the downstairs office. It rang a bell, so I came up."

He nodded, watching her like an eager young hawk. She sighed and it sounded like a cross between ecstasy and rapture. Rex muzzled his own interpretation of the sound when she spoke again. "Rex, if you're not doing anything tonight, how about dropping up to my apartment. I'm not doing anything anyway, and we can talk over old times."

Rex was nettled just a little. It was painfully evident that she wanted him to talk to her, which meant she considered him a friend and harmless. That crack about "not doing anything, anyway", always went over big with him, too. Like an oyster on the car seat. He started to decline, then curiosity got the better of him. He nodded lazily and pointed toward a pad and pencil beside the phone on the edge of the desk. "All right, Norma, it's a date. Write your address down there."

As she leaned forward to comply, Rex had some unpleasant thoughts. He'd show her that he, too, hadn't been locked in a closet since coming to Chicago.

The day dragged for Rex after Norma left. For some reason, he couldn't shake off his thoughts of the girl. It wasn't hard to understand, all things considered. Even in Chicago, she was something special. He flubbed through two asinine assignments of space-filling value only, and when quitting time came, he was already half-way home.

DUSK was a warm blanket tucked around the neck of the summer night when he drove leisurely over Sheridan Road. Norma wasn't suffering any. When a girl lived in Evanston, she was better off than average. Rex belonged to that tribe that could appraise, understand and label things, without putting a vulgar name on them. He had Norma Whitman figured to the last letter, he thought.

The apartment building was one of those immaculately impersonal affairs. Expensive exterior, blunt, aloof and cold. And the people who lived in the myriad little warrens became, in time, ambulatory counterparts of their building. Pale, aloof, and cold. Rex parked his battered coupe, studied the building critically, and barged up to the apartment number Norma had written down at the office.

He punched the neat, orderly little door button with antagonism toward its complacent efficiency and the uniform alikeness it shared with all the other little buttons up and down the sepulchre-like hallway. The door opened without a sound and Norma stood looking at him with a smile. Rex looked at her, startled. He pushed past into the small, tastefully-furnished living room and closed the door as he shucked his hat and overcoat, then turned a very deliberate glance at her.

At the office she'd been chic; here she was overpowering. The scarlet robe clung to her and the open throat was deep and plunging. He felt a lunge of his pulse as he dropped onto the divan. "Norma, Grangeville should see you now."

She laughed and tossed her head. She liked flattery, even from a cub reporter. Although she still thought of Rex Holt as a star athlete, dashing, popular and handsome. Not, as he thought of himself; a slightly seedy-looking junior reporter of the *Tribune* with a tweed suit that looked like last year's horse blanket with sleeves.

"Drink?"

He shrugged exasperately. "I suppose. Say, now that we've established

an intimate footing, just what in hell do you do for a living?"

Her thick, graceful eyebrows arched a little and she cocked her head at him. "Are we? I mean, have we an intimate footing?"

He grinned slightly and nodded his head at her, letting his steady grey eyes go over her like a caress. "Well, if anyone from Grangeville should walk in now, and see you in that robe, they'd swear we were either married or living in sin. Either way, it'd be intimate."

She laughed as she mixed the drinks at a tiny bamboo sidebar and handed him his, bending down a little. He took one astonished look and felt the back of his neck getting red. Quickly, desperately, he tried to remember where the conversation had died. She sank down on the couch next to him. "That's my secret. What I do for a living, I mean." She turned to him. Her features were suddenly very serious and Rex got the feeling that asking him up to her apartment hadn't been as casual as he had originally thought.

"Rex, I'm not a particular friend of yours, I know. It's been such a long time since we knew each other, back home. But, for old time's sake, would you do something for me?"

IT HAD COME out so suddenly, so seriously, that he hesitated. A man learns the value of discretion and evasive promises after he's been in Chicago for a while. He nodded with a brusque, short bob of his head. "Yeah. I guess so. That is—"

"Oh, don't be so fearful; I don't want anyone murdered."

His grin flashed. "Well, that's reassuring."

"Don't kid, Rex. I'm awfully serious."

He put his empty highball glass on an end table and his voice had a cynical sound to it. "So I see. O. K. What's the scoop, Norma?"

"There's a man—"

"There usually is."

"Please, Rex."

"All right; I won't butt in again. Go on."

"There's a man who keeps pestering me to work for him. He's pretty big in the city and he's getting awfully insistent. Three times, lately, I've lost jobs because he intimidates my employers." She turned and looked into his face. "Can you help me, Rex?"

He shrugged. "Darned if I know, Norma. Tell me, what kind of work does he want you to do?"

"He runs some nightclubs and he wants me to sing for him."

"Do you sing?"

For just a second, a flash of humor showed in her eyes. "Pretty clever, aren't you? No; I do custom modeling. It pays well. Besides, I don't want to become a singer, and I don't want to work for Mike Moretti."

Rex winced. "Mike Moretti? Yike! Norma, you're very beautiful; did I ever tell you that, back in Grangeville?"

"No. In fact, you wouldn't even date me back there. I was just a junior, remember?"

"Uh-huh. Mix us another drink, will you? That man's name scared all the warmth from the last one out of me."

She got up and went over to the bar. He watched her dreamily. "Do you know Moretti?"

"No; not in any way that's not associated with reading about him every couple of days in the *Tribune.*"

She handed Rex his highball and he looked a little closer that time. The real thing. He nodded as he sipped his drink. That was one thing Grangeville equipped its girls with that Chicago couldn't improve on. Norma saw the nod and leaned over eagerly. "You'll help me, Rex? I saw you nod your head." She leaned farther. He tried to protest that his nod hadn't meant that at all, but she was so close and it was so comfortable, there on the couch, and the drink was so relaxing—

The memory of what happened next was always sort of hazy to both of them. Anyway, Rex heard a door open, disentangled himself, and looked up. The face was familiar to nine-tenths of the people of Cook County.

MIKE MORETTI was big and florid and almost sad-looking, but right then his face wasn't sad-looking at all. First it was amazed, then it filled with hot blood and he moved across the room, grabbed Rex's shoulder, and hauled him to his feet. Rex saw it coming, and besides, he was fifteen years younger. He ducked easily as the puffy fist swooshed past his head.

Automatically, he swung low with his left fist, shoulder down and hunched behind it. Mike Moretti let out a lungful of air and gasped profanely; he never saw the next one coming at all. It crashed into the side of his head with a noise like a popping champagne cork. He went over backwards gracefully, almost elegantly, and lay still and relaxed on the carpet.

Rex stood looking down at him, still startled at even seeing the man. He shook his head lugubriously. "Damn. Things sure happen fast around here." He looked over at Norma, where she was huddled, ashen and wide-eyed, on the couch. "Of course, you had no idea this bird was coming, did you?" The sarcasm in his voice was unmistakable.

She watched, horror stricken, as Rex scooped up his hat, jammed it onto his touseled head and looked hesitatingly at the unconscious gangster. "No, Rex. Believe me. He's never come here before."

Rex's thoughtful glance swept back over the lavish apartment, then he turned toward the door. "No, of course not. Moretti's got nothing more important to do than just trot around the city stumbling into girls' apartments." He faced around at the door and divided his baleful glance between Norma, dishevelled and small on the couch, and the relaxed figure on the floor. "You might as well tell him who floored him, Norma. It'll save him the trouble of finding me, which he'll do anyway, and besides," his eyes went back to her white face, "he'll want to know who was with his little wren."

2

THE DOOR slammed on her words when Norma tried to answer. Rex Holt drove home in an angry frame of mind. Another mistake, only this one was on the grand scale. Mike Moretti was a notorious character. He was loaded with loot from his nightclubs, and was known to be the father of half a dozen secret gambling dives. among assorted other questionable enterprises. The police would have given a lot to nail him, but a glittering array of legal talent kept him, if not invulnerable, at least secure from moment to moment.

Rex wagged his head dolefully as he got into bed. Of all the people in Chicago to plaster, he had to pick the one man who would get revenge within, or without, the law.

Ed Levin came into the office the next day. He plunked down in Rex's only spare chair and tossed a crumpled copy of the morning paper on his desk. Ed was a cub, too, but he was a bundle of feral energy. A dark-headed darting, inquisitive man in his late twenties. "Read that, colleague."

As Rex picked up the paper and stretched out the wrinkles, Levin's head was lolling gently from side to side. "Man! A guy could go into the big office in a hurry if he could stumble onto one of those yarns. Lord; I wish something big an' startling like that would come my way. I'd—"

He broke off in alarm as Rex swore

and pressed the paper flatter on the desk, studying the half page spread of Mike Moretti's face with a smaller inset of Norma's picture beside it.

Levin wrinkled his eyebrows at Rex and leaned over the desk. "What's so awful? Look, don't get carried away. All it says is that Mike Moretti, the big time hoodlum, got made into a corpse in some babe's apartment last night, an' that he's a little colder'n the slab he's resting on, now."

Ed leaned back again, completely unaware of the horror on Rex's face, lost in his wistful dreams again. "Just think, Rex. I could go into old Hairy Shanks Snell an' say, 'Look here, I'm the guy who scooped the city on Moretti's murder'." He swung back to Rex, a big smile on his face that died swiftly, dismally, and was replaced by a look of quick alarm. "What's the matter, Rex? You going to be sick?"

Rex was staring at the banner headline. Moretti was murdered. He raised his eyes to meet Ed's concerned look. "All I did was knock him cold."

Levin froze in his chair and said nothing for a long, dead moment, then the words came out in a shocked voice. "Oh, no!" He stared at Rex a moment longer, then his wiry frame came to life. He got up quickly. "Come on; you an' me are goin' over to Opal's for a cup of coffee."

Rex automatically reached for his hat and followed the shorter man to the elevator. They rode down in silence, left the building, made a successful skirmish through the traffic and entered Opal's, where they slumped into a tiny booth and waved absently at Opal, big and amiable and black as the ace of spades, for coffee.

"All right, Rex. Start from the beginning."

Rex did. He told of meeting Norma; of going to her apartment; of slugging Moretti and then going home to bed. Ed Levin paid Opal when she brought the coffee and drank it slowly, like he detested the stuff, but had the habit. "What'd you hit him with? A Cadillac?"

Rex shook his head and held up a slightly bruised left fist. Ed shook his head, too. "That's no good. Look, Rex. Mike Moretti was killed by a blow from a blunt instrument. You know," he said, "the good old blunt instrument that's always going around hitting people." He was thoughtfully quiet for a long time, then spoke again. "The whole right side of his skull was bashed in; the right ear was damned near town off. What a wallop."

REX FINISHED his coffee and felt better. He knew he hadn't killed Moretti, but he also knew he was in no position to prove it. He thought, too, that perhaps Norma had done it. Moretti probably got rough with her when he came to, she grabbed something and slugged him. He wasn't aware that he'd been talking out loud until Ed Levin interrupted him. "That won't jell, Rex. Look; even if the girl was strong enough to stove in Moretti's skull, which I doubt, she couldn't have done it."

"Why?"

"According to the papers, Moretti was struck from behind. Just how in hell was that babe, who the papers say is stacked but not very big, going to get around behind a big guy like Moretti an' hit him, when he's mad? Naw, it's no good. A man did it, Rex—the last man to see Mike Moretti alive. Damn! What a position you put me in."

"What d'you mean?"

"Listen, featherbrain; here I'm dreamin' about bein' a star reporter, an' you give me the yarn of the century, an' I can't do anything about it." He got up. "Come on, slugger, let's go over to the pokey an' see can we get in to yarn with your girl friend." He waited for Rex to don his hat and coat and get up. "Oh hell. And me with a pregnant wife an' a past due bank installment!"

Rex was feeling like himself when they got to the precinct station. He kidded an elderly sergeant he knew into letting them see Norma. She was ashen-faced and on the rebound from intense shock when they sat down to talk. Her eyes never left Rex's face. Ed Levin sighed audibly and forced his mind back to business. Even the jail dress couldn't detract from her.

"Norma, tell us who visited your place after Rex left?" Levin asked.

She shook her head, still looking at Rex. "I don't know."

Ed's voice sounded a little dubious. "You weren't asleep, were you? With Moretti lying on the floor where Rex put him?"

"No; I wasn't asleep. I was crying, so I went into the bathroom to wash my face. When I came back, Moretti was dead, and there was blood all over everything. Someone had come in and hit him while I was out of the room." She was still looking at Rex. Suddenly, he knew why. Norma thought he had come back and killed Moretti.

Ed started to speak, but Rex interrupted him. "Norma, what did you tell the police?"

"Just what I've told you; the only thing I didn't say was that you were there at all. I just said Moretti was sitting on the couch, and when I came back into the room, he was on the floor with the right side of his head bashed in."

"What did they say?"

"All they asked was if I always leave the door unlocked?"

Rex recognized police sarcasm. He looked at Norma across the little table and leaned forward. "I didn't come back; you think that, don't you?"

She seemed to soften a little. The perplexed stare softened a little. "If you didn't, Rex, who could've done it?"

Ed shrugged his way back into the conversation. "It's not easy to say who did it, but it's not hard to understand why. Look; this Moretti character had more enemies than Carter had pills, right? O. K. One of 'em was following him last night, saw the set-up when Rex clobbered him, saw you leave the room and just naturally took advantage of a swell opportunity. I'd do the same myself."

Levin looked up at the sudden silence, saw the matron eyeing him, jumped up quickly with a very red face and started for the door. "But of course, I didn't."

"Rex, be careful."

He knew what she meant. Whoever had killed Moretti knew who had knocked him out in the first place. He nodded. "Ed and I will be working for you, honey. Don't give up." It sounded woefully inadequate to him when he said it. She smiled up at him and the moistness of her deep blue eyes was like a dewy veil over the confidence that shone out at him. "I know you will, Rex. Good bye."

REX HOLT had a lump in his throat as big as a walnut when he finally got back to the car. Ed Levin was slouched down beside the driver's seat with a dark look on his face. Rex eyed him critically. "What's the trouble?"

Levin's head came around with a startled look on it. "You—practically in the electric chair—an' you got the guts to ask *me* what's the trouble? I'll tell you. We've got the chance of a lifetime in our laps. If we don't flub it, Rex, we're made. Look, all we've got to do is find which of the hundred guys who hated Moretti, killed him. Simple, isn't it?"

"Yeah. It's going to be pleasant, too—about as pleasant as attending a funeral. Listen, Ed, these hoods play for keeps. All we've got to do is let them know what we're up to and *bingo!* We're on slabs next to Moretti. It's a funny thing, but a murderer can't get hung any higher for killing a dozen people than he can for killing one."

"Yeah. I know. Head back to the office. I've got to think."

3

REX SNORTED as he drove back to the *Tribune* building. Both men went to Rex's office, where an irate editor was fuming over Rex's absence. He turned angrily as the two men entered. "Where in hell have you been? Damn it all, I got a flower show and a boat race to be covered an' where are you birds when I want you?"

Rex bristled a little, but held it back as he sat down at the desk. "We've been over talking to Norma Whitman, the girl in whose apartment Mike Moretti was killed."

The editor started to say something nasty, then changed his mind. "You see her?"

"Yeah."

"What'd she say?"

"Exactly what's in the papers already."

"How'd you get to her?"

"I went to school with her back in Grangeville, Idaho."

"The hell. Say, Rex, do a write-up on her. Human interest angle. Sweet thing comes to Chicago, falls in with evil friends. That stuff." Rex nodded silently. "Then bring it down to my office when you're through. That'll work in fine. It'll give the *Tribune* an angle the other rags don't have. It's a lucky break for us, you knowin' her." He started out the door, saw Ed Levin, and started to chew him out for leaving the building.

Rex interrupted. "How about leavin' Ed here to work with me on this?"

Snell turned, surprised, and looked at Rex for a moment in silence, then shrugged. "All right; you might as well have him in here getting in your way as getting lost somewhere."

Ed and Rex looked askance at one another after the editor had left. Levin moaned dolefully. "If he only knew, the rat. We got a story, with personal interviews, yet, and even pictures, and here it lies, waiting for some dumb cluck from a rag like the *Graphic* to steal it from us." He put both hands under his chin and rocked his head back and forth in exaggerated grief.

Rex grinned crookedly. "I've got to whip up the personal interest story on Norma. Why don't you run us down some leads on Moretti's enemies so's you and I can go calling on people, tonight, after work?"

Levin's eyes popped wide open. "You mean you an' me are going to call on Moretti's murderer, maybe?"

"Sure. We have to get Norma off the hook, save my neck and get the story of the decade—all before the cops come and hang me." He grinned. "Tonight's the only time we're likely to have, so get the lead out and dig us up the scoop on our departed villain."

Levin got slowly out of his chair. "All right. I'll dig up Moretti's playmates; but I'll be damned if I like the idea of dyin' because you—"

"Me? Listen, squirt, you're the one who's always wailing he wants to be a big name newspaperman, not me. Besides, what's a little risk? You can't die but once."

"How do you know? Anyway, I'm not tired of living yet." Levin went out still grumbling to himself. As soon as the door was closed behind him, Rex went into action. He grabbed the telephone and called the jail where Norma Whitman was a prisoner. He cajoled his sergeant friend into letting him talk to her. When he finally got her on the wire, he said, "Listen, Norma. I want you to tell the police who the man was who floored Moretti last night."

"Rex, you're insane. They'll—"

"Norma, did I ever tell you you're lovely?"

"Yes, last night; but you didn't mean it. Anyway, you're—"

"Honey, I know what I'm doing. I can't explain it now because I haven't time. Please, Norma, tell 'em all about my part in the murder, but wait until six-thirty this evening before you do it. Got that?"

"Yes. Rex, are you sure—"

"Norma, want to know something else?"

"What?"

"I think I'm in love with you. It dawned on me last night after I clouted Moretti."

"Rex! Now isn't the time—"

" 'Bye, darling. Keep your fingers crossed."

EDITOR SNELL read Rex's article on Norma Whitman with a frozen face. He tossed it onto his desk with a careless flick and sighed. For a long second he looked at Rex without saying a word, then he nodded somberly. "It's pretty good; we'll run it." Rex nodded absently, eyeing the clock, and backed out of the office. The editor watched him go thoughtfully. Funny how a man reveals himself without knowing it, when he writes things.

Ed Levin was sitting at Rex's desk when he got back to his cubicle. "I got 'em, but they read like a list of prominent people to avoid meeting—not anyone you'd deliberately go out to see, if you were in your right mind."

Rex clamped his battered hat on. "Come on, star reporter. Tonight's the night we find out if you've got the makings of a big name."

Ed was mumbling something unpleasant about obituary columns as he grunted in beside Rex in the small coupe. "The first one's Salvatore Dilletanti over on Halsted. Look; what about the cops? This isn't strictly legal, you—"

"Quit worrying, will you? The cops'll be with us before the night's over."

"Yeah, that's what I'm afraid of. The undertaker, too, maybe."

A SHORT while later, they set to questioning the first man on the list. Salvatore Dilletanti was a short, greasy little man with a harsh gash for a mouth and beady black eyes. He shrugged away the questions from the counter of his gin mill. "I didn't have nothin' particular against Mike, see? He was a lot o' air an' a little gristle. We wasn't exactly what you'd call chums, but he lef' me alone an' I lef' him alone. See?"

"Yeah." Rex nodded, offering a cigaret. "Thanks." He held a match as Dilletanti took a weed out of the pack, inhaled off the match, shrugged, and waddled down the bar to take care of a clamoring customer.

He nudged Ed. "Walk to the other end of the bar and ask Dilletanti's barman if he was here last night." Levin turned and ambled away. Someone stuck a wasted dime in the nickelodeon and a dripping, sexy grind of music came out to add its bit to the sleazy waves of atmosphere that permeated the place.

Rex was on his second drink, justifying his loitering by openly flirting with a middle aged harridan who was boldly smiling back at him, when Ed came back. "Any luck?"

Ed nodded. "Yeah. I asked him how he liked having help tonight, instead of being alone like last night. He walked right into it. Said he didn't mind holding down the bar alone last night, but he hated having to hop drinks to the tables, too. In other words, Dilletanti wasn't here last night." He shrugged. "Of course, that doesn't prove much."

Rex nodded. "Fine. Dilletanti is number one on our list, so far; let's go." He saw Ed's dour look and tapped him gently on the arm. "Not being here doesn't prove as much as accepting that cigaret does."

"Huh?"

"Never mind. Let's go."

Rex's elation soured a little, though, as they went from one name on their

lists to another, until they got to the dazzling apartment of a big-time gambler named Mort Sabine. He was big, florid and overbearing, and veneered with a smug complaceny. "Look; ya want to know anythin' about me, see my lawyer; I got nothin' to say. Anyway, I hardly knew Moretti. The cops already been here once today, an' they didn't get no more."

He was closing the door when Levin's foot blocked it. "Sabine, we're not cops; we aren't even friends of Moretti. We got an interest in the thing is all. Listen; I got a brother. Jascha Levin—"

"The hell. Jascha Levin. Him an' me went to ninety-second street school together. You're his brother?" The pale eyes went over Ed. "Kind o' runty, ain't ya?"

"Yeah. I got the back seat like an orphan pup. Do me a favor for Jascha's sake. Who knocked off Moretti? On the side, y'understand. No cops. Just between us."

Sabine's face went from Ed to Rex and back again. He shrugged. "I don't know. Got an idea though. Moretti an' a meatball named Gomez been at it for a month or two over a string of card tables over in the Porto Rican section of town. This Gomez ain't a lily. Strictly small, but even so, ya got to watch 'em. Don't take a big man to knock ya off. Go see Gomez; he's got a dive called the *Pacifico*. That's all I can tell you, on the level."

4

THE *Pacifico* wasn't hard to find. It was a smoky, dangerous, smelly gin mill about the size of a two car garage. There were dark, shiny faces with brown eyes, at the tiny tables and muddy, black eyes in equally muddy black faces, at the bar. Rex felt the hair along the back of his neck coming up and Ed Levin, oddly enough, acted like an old hand in the place. Rex looked at the neon clock over the bar. Five after six. He ordered a martini from the bartender, a sallow man of indeterminate years with disillusioned, bitter eyes.

"You Gomez?"

The man looked squarely at Rex, shook his head and jerked a rubbery thumb over at a door marked *Private*. They drank their highballs and studied the place. It was awful, and with their coming hadn't improved any. The habitues were stiff and unnatural. Rex nudged Ed. They finished their drinks and went over to the little door. Ed knuckled it softly and a voice bellowed for them to come in. They went. The man at the desk was sitting with his coat off and a sweat-stained shoulder holster was laced across his thick chest. He looked at them unblinkingly.

"You Gomez?"

"That's right. Who you? What ya want?"

Rex fished out a package of cigarets. "Have a smoke."

Gomez extended his right hand without taking his eyes off them. Ed flicked a match and Gomez sucked inwardly. "Awright. What ya want?"

Rex leaned casually against the wall, both hands in his overcoat pockets. "A little information. Who killed Moretti?"

"Cops, huh?" Gomez leaned back and looked grimly pleasant. "I wish I knew. I'd give him a thousand bucks. Did me a favor."

"You have any ideas?"

"No. Not a one."

"We heard—"

Gomez spat a piece of tobacco off his tongue. "Sure. I know what ya heard; Moretti an' me was on the outs. We was. But I didn't kill him, or hire it done."

Rex felt cheated. Gomez looked like the type who'd kill his own son, but

there was something about the man that said he was telling the truth. He nodded thoughtfully. "All right, that's good enough for me; come on, Ed."

They went back into the bar, where Ed pulled his same tactic on the bartender he had used before, but the man said Gomez hadn't left the office the night before. They went back to Rex's car and drove back uptown.

"He's probably lying."

"No," Rex said. "I don't think so."

"Where to, now?"

"Back to Dilletanti's place. I want to offer him another cigaret."

"Huh?"

"It's been in the back of my mind as a way to disqualify suspects. The guy who killed Moretti was right-handed."

"So what? Most people are."

"Yeah. I know. But a left-handed man, like me for instance, notices things like that, while the average guy doesn't pay any attention to what hand you use."

"Like I said before, so what?"

"So Moretti's head was bashed in from behind on the right side, remember?" Rex watched Ed frown, thinking back. "All right. Then the guy who hit him wasn't left-handed, which lets me out, because a left-handed guy would've cracked him on the left side of the skull. Get it?" Ed shook his head negatively. "Look, imagine you're standing behind Moretti with a club. He's facing away from you, see? All right; you raise and swing your club and bust him on the side of the head. Which side would the blow fall on, you being right-handed?"

"The right side, of course." Levin's mouth puckered a little. "Yeah. Yeah. You got something there. I don't know what good it'll do us, though, because all it proves is that you, being left-handed, didn't kill Moretti. It don't help us find out who *did* kill him, and that's what we're after."

REX SLID into a taxi stand and left the car. Ed, hunched over against the night chill, followed him back into Dilletanti's nightclub. The black eyes looked at them closely as they sidled back up to the bar.

"Now what?"

"Have a cigaret?"

Dilletanti looked suspiciously at the extended package in Rex's hand and shook his head. "No thanks. Smokin' too much lately. Besides, one off you a day is enough." The beady eyes lifted to their faces. "You want drinks, or more questions?"

"Both. Scotch and soda and a martini."

Ed started to say something. Rex scowled and shook his head. He was watching Dilletanti using the swizzle stick in the martini. Levin caught on and watched, too. The man's back was to them. Levin made a wry face as Dilletanti's figure was reflected back to them in the backbar mirror. He was using his right hand to stir the drink. They drank in silence, asked a few unimportant questions and left. Again driving through town, Ed swore irritably. "Another prime suspect; he was using his right hand, too."

"No." Rex shot back. "You're wrong. You were watching his reflection in the mirror and mirrors always reverse things, so actually, Dilletanti was using his *left* hand with that swizzle stick."

Levin grimaced. "Fine. Just fine. He's the only decent suspect we got. Our only good prospect for the hot seat, an' now he's off the hook." He cleared his throat disgustedly. "Who in hell wants to be a cop, anyway? Where in hell're you going, now?"

"Back to see your brother's school chum."

"Mort Sabine?"

"Yeah."

"Why? Is he right-handed like the rest of us normal people?"

Rex ignored the sarcasm. "In the first place, we don't dare hang out in one place too long. The cops'll be hot after us by now. But mainly because

I'm wondering why he sicked us on Gomez. I mean, aside from friction between Gomez and Moretti, he had some other reason and I'd like to know what it is."

"What makes you think so?"

"Ed, we both know that Moretti had a lot of enemies. One small-time gin mill operator isn't important. Hell, Moretti could've crushed Gomez out of hand. He had *big* enemies, not little ones, so when Sabine put the finger on little Gomez, he had something in mind. We want to know what it was."

Levin got out of the car at Sabine's apartment building with a petulant look. "I get it. Moretti was too big, you think, to waste much time on a punk like Gomez. He could've sent around some of his boys to smash Gomez easy, so his enemies, at least the ones likely to kill him, were pretty big guys. Like big time gamblers, maybe. Like Sabine himself."

"Right."

MORT SABINE met them at the door. He wasn't smiling. "Come in." They both entered, stood uncomfortably just inside the door and looked at the two men who were eyeing them from chairs in the plush living room. Sabine went back to his chair and sat down. "All right. What's it this time?" He nodded toward the bald man with the dark skin sitting beside him. "Shammel, my lawyer. I called him after you guys were here before. Go ahead; what's on your minds?"

Rex eyed each of the three men before he spoke. He was looking at the overly-dressed, cold-eyed third man of the trio who was whirling a key chain awkwardly with his left hand, and returning Rex's stare with a challenging look, when he finally spoke. "Nothing much." He walked over easily and dropped into the vacant chair beside the key-chain twirler. "Just want to ask you two more questions, if you don't mind."

Ed took his cue from Rex, and sat down and said nothing. Sabine shrugged and looked a tiny bit puzzled, but his attorney's eyes were bird-bright and gauging. The gambler had a copy of the *Tribune* beside him on the table. Rex saw the splash of Moretti's face staring at the ceiling from the front page. A black byline said something about a 'new clue.' He guessed it meant him.

The attorney, Shammel, spoke, "What're the questions?"

Rex leaned forward in his chair and bumped the key-chain twirler's arm. The man dropped the chain, threw a baleful glance at Rex and extended his right hand to pick it up. Rex smiled at Shammel, nodding toward the man on his right. "This one of Sabine's boys?"

"A friend. Just a friend," the lawyer said warily. "Why?"

"Because he's sure working hard trying to learn how to twirl a key-chain with his left hand."

"So what?"

Rex shrugged. "Nothing. Only, being left-handed myself, I notice when other people are right-handed."

Shammel put on a perplexed frown but Rex wasn't fooled. He tensed, too, as he noticed the key-chain stop whirling and hang motionless as the third man swung slowly and looked at him with the same wide-eyed, impassive look. "What's this all about?"

"You read the papers, Shammel. You know Moretti was knocked off by having the right side of his head bashed in. You've also probably figured out by now that the police know a right-handed man did the job. Not a left-handed man like they probably thought for a while."

Rex's head jerked abruptly toward the hoodlum beside him. "If this joker hadn't been working so hard to learn how to be left-handed, maybe I wouldn't have tumbled. He should've gone on being right-handed. Hell, no one thinks there's anything odd about a right-handed man. He gave himself

away when I bumped him—on purpose—and he dropped the key-chain. He picked it up with his right hand. Instinct, Shammel. Get it? He was concentrating on twirling the thing with his left hand, but when he picked it up, he did it by instinct, and used his right hand." Rex was sitting forward in his chair, now, watching the hoodlum and Shammel at the same time. "How much did Sabine pay him to knock off Mike Moretti?"

SHAMEL didn't answer. He didn't have a chance, even if he was going to. The hoodlum let the key-chain drop as his arm started for his shoulder holster. It was a mistake. Rex lashed out with a fist that caught the man flush in the mouth and snapped his head hard against the upholstered back of the chair. Sabine was on his feet shouting something as Rex lunged out of the chair and yanked the killer to his feet, cocked another left, and froze as Ed Levin's voice broke into the turmoil, oddly high-pitched and excited. "Put your hands up. All of you! Don't make a move. Not a wiggle!"

Rex turned in amazement and saw Ed holding a battered revolver in his fist. He shoved the hoodlum around in front of him. "Ed! Where'd you get that thing?"

Ed's face was several pastels lighter than usual. He labored over a sickly smile. "I borrowed it off the night watchman. Hell! If you think I'm crazy enough to come out hunting with you, without a gun, you're nuts."

Rex nodded somberly. "You're all right, Ed; you got the makings of a big time reporter. Call the cops."

Levin shook his head. "No. You do it. I don't dare move."

Rex phoned the police, identified himself and told them where he was. The answering officer sounded a little grim when he promised to send a car over right away. A little exultant, too.

The police found Rex Holt, their number one suspect, holding the snub-

nosed thirty-eight he had taken from the character with the key-chain. He was menacing Sabine, red-faced and angry-looking, and the hoodlum with the split mouth. They gingerly requested him to turn the gun over to them, breathed with relief when he complied, then listened to his story and took all five of them down to the station house.

It was the dapper, greying police surgeon who clinched it for Rex. He said bluntly that a known left-handed man couldn't have possibly struck Moretti on the right side of the head the way the murder was done. Levin, still pale, but with his eyes gleaming, was making noises on every available piece of scratch paper in the interrogation room.

IT WASN'T until Rex was in Snell's office at the *Tribune* next day that he shocked Ed speechless. Snell shook his hand and smiled widely—a rare occurence. "Rex, you an' Ed deserve to be moved into the big office. You boys really scooped the city on this Moretti job. I was just talking with Evans of Homicide. He says it was easy. When he separated the hood and Sabine, they both sang their heads off. The hood was a hired killer from New York. Even Shammel's afraid to touch him."

Snell sat down behind his desk, still grinning happily. "We've got a full page spread on this thing for tonight's

paper. You both get a raise, too."

Rex looked a little uncomfortable as he fished a limp envelope out of his pocket. "Uh—Mister Snell, I—"

"George, boys. Just plain George."

"Uh—yeah. George. See these two tickets on Federal Airlines for Grangeville, Idaho, one way?"

"Yeah?" Snell's smile was turning to clabber, slowly but definitely. "What about 'em, Rex? You want a vacation?"

"No. Not exactly. Y'see, I was married this morning real early. My wife and I are going back where we came from. Back to Grangeville. We both thought how nice it is back there about now. Gettin' along toward Spring an' all. You know—"

Ed spoke very softly. "Norma? You and Norma get married?"

"Yeah, Ed. I'm sorry, but—"

"Sure, Rex." Snell was looking at him benignly. "We understand. I could've told you it'd of ended this way after I read that human interest angle you did on her yesterday." He got up and stuck out his hand. "Good luck, Rex; we'll always have a spot for you if you ever decide to come back."

Rex and Ed were still gloomily looking at each other when the office door opened and Norma stood framed in the opening. All three men looked at her in silence. She was breathtaking in her scarlet jacket and grey flannel skirt. Rex got up slowly, his eyes and his wife's eyes locking as though they alone were in the world.

Ed Levin sighed as the door closed behind them. "She wore scarlet, in passing through," he said softly.

Snell nodded. His hands clasped comfortably behind his balding head. "Use that, Ed. It's sort of poetic. We'll feature it under your name. You know; in scarlet passing. Get it?"

Ed got up and nodded. He should've felt elated, but he didn't.

★

Here's Lauran Paine's Latest
CALEB DOORN Novel

TEXAS HERDS BRING DEATH

plus a powerful short story of a starpacker's burden

LAWMAN ON A STRING
by Mal Kent

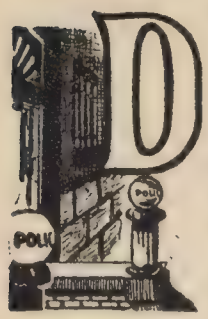
These and many others are in the September issue of

DOUBLE • ACTION WESTERN

ALL THE ANGLES

by Basil Wells

Lee Dunn was sure he'd figured out everything, but something seemed to have gone wrong with his neat little double-murder scheme...



DUNN'S mind must have wandered for a moment, but now his senses were keenly alert. He had not realized it was evening; darkness was near.

On the sparsely-grassed level of soil before him, his relaxed red-haired knuckles filled half his vision. Just to the left of them, he knew, lay the long-barreled revolver with which he had shot Paul Ebbins. And he was lying here above the fallen man, alert for any possibility of the guard's shamming death until the arrival of reinforcements.

He scowled as he tried to recall what he had done, and what he must tell them; for the moment, Lee Dunn could not distinguish the truth of what had happened from the carefully calculated webwork of half-truths and lies.

He cursed at the sharp jut of stone, or sun-baked clay, that gouged into his ribs and attempted to wriggle away; it was useless. The shift in position brought his body into contact with yet another fragment of unseen and yet-more painful rock.

"I was worried about Fred," he would tell the other guards on the Marvin estate when they arrived. *"What with this strike at Metalcraft and the ill-feeling of his employees—well, I just couldn't stand doing nothing."*

He'd pause there and his throat would seem to choke up with emotion while he looked down at the frail twisted old body of Frederick Marvin. And there would be blood on the grass of the valley below this grassy ledge where he sprawled, waiting. There would be the tiny black hole left by a rifle bullet in the gnarled old manufacturer's forehead, too.

"So I rode over the path above the Rocks up there." Dunn could sense the smooth glibness with which his words would flow. *"I knew Fred and his wife would be riding along the valley soon, and I planned to join them."*

His lips twisted as he recalled abruptly the care with which he had wormed his way down among the rocks until he could see the bridle path clearly in the wooded valley below. And there, too, he had an unobstructed view of the sheltered ledge where Paul Ebbins sat on guard, an open green thermos bottle smoking at his elbow.

Ebbins was using field glasses to study the broken slope of the Rocks. Below him, the electrified barrier about the Marvin estate crossed the valley, its twelve-foot mesh of galvanized wire barring legitimate passage, but from this vantage point an attack was possible.

And the strike was already more than three hundred days old.

"Frankly," Lee Dunn would say, *"I was worried about the trustworthiness of Ebbins. With the reduction of Metalcraft's guard force he was laid off. His brother had lost his car and the home he was buying, and his father had to mortgage his own property to live. All this because of the strike."*

He would shake his head sadly at this, and his voice would drop lower—as though reluctant to tell of the horror of the moments just passed.

Of course he had known of Ebbins'

plight, and he'd been the one to suggest to Frederick Marvin that the unemployed plant guard might be put to good use policing the outer rim of Marvin's thousand acre wooded estate. Only he'd cautioned Marvin about mentioning his, Dunn's name, suggesting that the strikers might assume he was weakening by showing concern about Ebbins' relatives.

For five years, Lee Dunn had been manager of Metalcraft Incorporated, and year by year old Frederick Marvin had yielded more authority. Today he was taking over *all* that authority—and Velma Marvin, his employer's youngish wife as well!

He'd come to that decision two years before—a few months before his wife was killed by an armed bandit's chance bullet while he struggled with the killer for the weapon. His lips twisted faintly. Her death had been very convenient—she'd been asking too many questions about securities he was supposed to have purchased.

Sudden sweat stood out on his forehead as the painful pressure under his ribs shot fresh agony through his body. He *would* have to pick the roughest patch of ground on the slope!

Why didn't those guards hurry? Surely they'd heard the exchange of shots; they'd find him above Ebbins' station on the slope, and beside the dead guard would be the rifle that had killed old Frederick Marvin. Even without a word from his lips they could see what had happened.

Dunn's eyes blurred momentarily as he tried to shift his cramped body, and when they cleared again he saw the scuffed brown shoes and the square-toed black shoes of two men planted firmly on the sparsely grassed level before him.

He was conscious of the distant roar of their excited voices, and commanded his legs and arms to push him up to face them. And, unbelieving, he twitched not a muscle!

And then, beyond the toed-out twin pair of shoes, he caught the velvety brown of a rifle's wooden stock—the gun that should have been lying beside Paul Ebbins' stiffening fingers!

A voiceless scream tore up from his lungs and convulsed stomach and burst from his contorted lips like a pent-up gust of breath. For now he knew what had really happened when that deadly rifle had slammed out its murderous missile of metal.

Across a great wavering void of silence Dunn heard the thready pipings of men's voices. He strained his failing hearing.

THE SOFTER, slow-spoken whisper demanded, "How'd you suspicion him, Paul? Why'd he want to kill pore ol' Mr. Marvin?"

That would be Glenn Balca, another of the plant guards, laid off when the strike first started. And Paul—that would be Paul Ebbins! He felt his ragged breathing rattle out hideously.

"I expect it was the way his wife was killed," Ebbins' crisper voice replied, distantly. "I couldn't help wondering if Mr. Dunn hadn't planned the whole affair to dispose of her. And his killing the man he'd hired made him a hero.

"Probably gave the poor guy a fiver to stage a fake holdup."

Ebbins was wrong; the muddy brain of the prone man denied his words. It had been forty dollars.

There were the softer, Southern tones of Balca: "So you smelled th' same kinda trouble here, Paul? Reckoned maybe Dunn was fixin' to saddle you with the Boss' killin'?"

"Not exactly," denied Ebbins. "I wasn't sure what sort of deviltry Dunn was up to getting me this job. But I did know he disliked me—almost as much as I despised him."

"So that's why you cut me in—splittin' yore wages like you done—so's I'd keep yore back covered!"

"Uh huh." The thinning filament of sound was almost inaudible to

Dunn's echoing eardrums. "And it paid off; you downed him just as he was shooting at the Boss."

"I figure he'd have got me next, tossed down the rifle, and played hero again. Funny how a killer always follows the same pattern."

Sluggishly Dunn's thoughts mulled over what he had heard. He'd not considered the possibility of a second watcher on the slope; he thought he'd covered all the angles, but...well, now he must get to work on a new plan, one that would implicate both men!

Lee Dunn was not conscious of the fading of the pain in his chest, or the swift darkness that swallowed his vision—even as the last of his blood reddened the grass. His brain was busy.

This time he would consider *all* the angles...

★

by Thomas Thursday

SGT. LOGAN'S 3 STRANGE CASES

(Sergeant Pete Logan, a veteran of 27 years as an officer on the Miami, Fla., police department, considers these three cases the weirdest and most fantastic of his entire career).

THE CASE OF THE FLYING SHOTGUN

IT WAS late in the afternoon of March 10, 1927, when a woman phoned Headquarters. She said, "I think there is something wrong in the garage apartment in back of our house. A man rented it last week, about four days ago, and we have not seen him come out since. And on the very first night he moved in, we are fairly certain we heard a shot fired."

When Logan reached the stuccoed apartment, in the southwest section, he found the single door locked. The living-quarters were on the second floor, reached by narrow wooden stairs at the right, and from the outside of the building. Dead pine-needles, along with faded and rain-soaked paper advertisements, indicated no one had used the stairs for some days.

Logan tried to force the door open, without success. Then he tried various skeleton keys. Still no luck. The only thing left to do was force the lock, which he did with a shoulder-attack. The lock snapped, and Logan found himself in a small, narrow hall. To the left was an efficiency kitchen, and to the right, middle, was another locked door. This also had to be shoulder-crashed.

The bedroom was medium-sized and cheaply furnished. A wooden bed and chair, along with dresser and cracked mirror, was all the furniture the room

contained—except for the man on the bed. He was dressed only in underwear.

But the top of his head was virtually blown off.

In a corner of the room, slightly to the right of the bed, was a 30-inch shotgun. It was standing straight against the wall, as if someone had carefully placed it there. Logan took another look at the dead man and noticed that his right foot was sockless.

Let Logan explain the rest:

"It was suicide, not murder. Investigation showed that the man, whose name was Cameron, had bought the shotgun two days previously in a North Miami avenue pawnshop. We also learned that he was a salesman and had recently been separated from his wife and two small children. More, he had no known enemies."

"If it was suicide," we asked, "then how do you account for the shotgun in the corner—*standing up and nine feet away?*"

"There can be only one answer to that," replied Logan. "First, a man about to take his life is naturally keyed-up, nervous, and his muscles are tensed like coiled springs. Obviously, Cameron pulled the trigger with his big toe, on his right foot; you will recall that the sock was off that foot when I found him. As his toe pulled the trigger, the fierce impact of the explosion shocked his brain, causing involuntary reflex-action to set in. That is what catapulated the shotgun into the corner of the room. As to why it stood straight up against the wall—that is just one of those freak coincidences that occur now and then."

THE CASE OF THE DEAD CHINESE

JUST ONE hour before dawn, Officer Joe McGann, switchboard operator, answered the buzz. A hoarse male voice said, "Go to the Devil's Punch Bowl and you'll be surprised!" and hung up. McGann passed the buzz to Logan, then driving the police ambulance. The sergeant arrived at the Devil's Punch Bowl fifteen minutes later. The Bowl is a shallow body of water, a miniature bay, fronting Brickell avenue. When the Atlantic tide is out, half the Bowl is just wet sand and beach. During Prohibition, the Bowl was a favorite sneak-in for rum-runners, coming in from Cuba and the Bahamas. They came in, that is, until the Coast Guard caught them.

A few feet from shore, Logan noticed what appeared to be a large brown bag. Wading out into the foot-deep water, he pulled it to shore. It was heavy and one end was tied with strong cord. Cutting the rope Logan aimed his flash into the bag. It spotted a human body, jacknifed, with feet near the aperture. As Logan emptied the bag, two land-crabs jumped out and scurried down the sand. In the bag was a dead Chinese.

With his throat cut.

Logan next began to flash his spotlight around the Devil's Punch Bowl. It pin-pointed what appeared to be similar macabre bags, three-quarters submerged in the water. Soon he had two more bags ashore and opened them. Both contained dead Chinese—with throats cut. It was then Logan buzzed Headquarters for assistance.

Five officers arrived just as dawn was breaking. For the next hour, they waded around the Bowl, plucking burlap-bagged Chinese out of the water, all with their throats cut. The total was exactly 20.

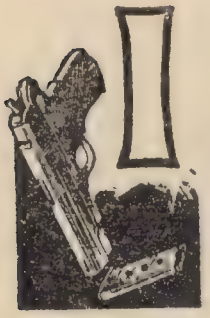
The bodies were finally turned over to a Miami funeral-hone. From identi-

fication found in their clothing and papers in pockets, most of them were identified as new arrivals, via the standard smuggling-route, from China. They were embalmed and sent back to their homeland to rest with their ancestors.

Said Logan to this reporter, 25 years later:

"We never did actually solve that case, but we were pretty damned sure that the crimes had been committed by Horace Alderman, a famed gangster-bootlegger of the time. About a year later, Alderman was hanged in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., for the murder of a federal officer. As to the 20 Chinese, I personally have no doubt that Alderman and his associates, being hard-pressed by a Coast Guard cutter, sneaked into the Devil's Punch Bowl with his human cargo, slit their throats, placed them in burlap bags—usually used for smuggling whiskey—and dumped them overboard. He undoubtedly started his trip from some hide-away on the Cuban coast and was headed for the New Jersey shores."

THE CASE OF THE HARD WAY HANGING



IT WAS the morning of October 17, 1931, that Sergeant Logan investigated what he thinks is his most unusual case. "The gimmick," said he, "was so different from anything I had ever seen or heard of before that, a year after it happened, I read a story in a detective fiction magazine, in which the writer used the very same plot. And I bet he got the idea from reading about the case in the papers.

"The house was an old, one-room shack in the vicinity of N. W. 3rd street and 20th avenue. Some kids had been playing around and thought they saw something strange through one of the two dirty windows. When I got there I found the door lockless but with some wooden crates piled against the inside.

"The ceiling had three heavy beams. A rope hung from the center beam and at the other end hung a man in dirty-blue denims. He was about 35 years old and had been dead for at least three days. I noticed that the body dangled a little more than a foot from the floor. But I also noticed something very peculiar; there was no chair or anything substantial enough for him to stand on in order to hang himself.

"In his pockets I found 79c, and a driver's license in the name of John S. Anderson, with an address in the Northwest section. Just how he had managed to hang himself, without any support, had me stymied. Then I noticed an icepick near the left wall. More, the floor was rather damp. Since it had not rained in Miami for more than a week, the moisture had not seeped through the roof.

"Then I got the idea. It was new, novel and completely screwball. Since the man was undoubtedly an ice-peddler he had employed an astounding method of hanging himself. He had simply hauled in two large cakes of block ice—don't ask me why!—and had stood upon them until they melted, thus tightening the noose around his neck."

"But," we said, "it must have taken the ice some time to melt."

"As you know," replied Logan, "it doesn't take ice too long to melt in this climate. But when it finally did melt, it left him hanging in mid-air. I can't tell you the reasons for such actions; all I can say is, some people are nuttier than others!"

★

Inspector Carruthers realized that no real-life detective could possibly be as terrific a sleuth as a fictional one. But perhaps he could learn from fiction, particularly from the proposition that when all other possibilities had been eliminated except one that was entirely fantastic and unbelievable, then the fantastic and unbelievable had to be the truth.

THE INSPECTOR HAD A HUNCH

by Walter Kanitz

INSPECTOR Carruthers sat comfortably reclined in the big chair, facing his superior, the Commissioner. They had discussed several matters of business, and now Carruthers was trying to revive his cold pipe which he had neglected during

their talk. The Commissioner puffed dense smoke from his cigar and looked out the window.

"Funny thing happened to me on the way to the office," he broke the silence.

Carruthers winced. "You remind me more and more of a comedian," he grumbled. "Every time I watch T. V. somebody opens the show with the same line: 'A funny thing happened to me on the way to the studio.' Why don't you go on T. V., John? I have seen lousier actors."

The Commissioner considered the suggestion before he agreed. "Not a bad idea; I am due for retirement pretty soon, anyway. A little income on the side couldn't do me any harm. After all, what has Sergeant Joe Friday that I haven't got?"

Carruthers gave in. "All right, all right...you win. What happened on the way to the office?"

"Oh...nothing important..."

"That's what I thought," interrupted the Inspector.

"An incident...maybe just a little unusual. You know the small bar a block down the street?"

Carruthers nodded.

"Well... I stopped there for a drink..."

"You..." Carruthers cut in incredulously, "...you stopped for a drink? John...tell me...aren't you living a little dangerously lately?"

The Commissioner suppressed his irritation. "Cut it out Tom; I am twenty-one three times over."

Carruthers grinned. "I know...but how about the little lady? She is known to have objected to your occasional drinks before!"

This time the Commissioner grinned. "She won't know; I am chewing mint-flavored gum ever since."

"Clever devil," said Carruthers. "But go on."

"Well...there was a man a couple stools from me."

"Not unusual in a bar."

"Of course not...but this fellow gave the bartender a one-dollar bill. When the bartender handed him his change, the man claimed he had given him a twenty-dollar bill."

"How I would have liked to see that bartender's face," said Carruthers, dreamily.

"It was funny. He first wanted to tell the guy off, but all of a sudden he changed his mind. He didn't take his eyes from the customer, and without a word he counted nineteen dollar bills on the counter."

"Never happens to me," sighed Carruthers. "They always shortchange me, the rascals. Serves the bartender right...that's poetic justice; it's funny, all right."

"Yes," said the Commissioner, pensively, "I guess you can call it funny—because I saw clearly that the man gave him a one-dollar bill...and not a twenty."

Carruthers grinned while he refilled his pipe. "How many drinks did you say you had, John?" he asked quietly.

"Get out," said the Commissioner. "Get out...before I throw that paperweight at your cynical head!"

IT WAS several months after this scene in the Commissioner's office. Carruthers had never taken his superior's story too seriously, and the Commissioner had never mentioned it again.

It was now in the middle of the afternoon. Carruthers passed the switchboard at headquarters, when the operator made him a sign. "The Commissioner wants you," the girl said; "he has been looking for you high and low. Somebody's in there with him."

"Thanks," said the Inspector. "Tell him I am on my way."

A tall, conservatively-dressed man rose politely when Carruthers entered the Commissioner's office. The introductions over, Carruthers headed for

his favored chair. The others settled down.

"Tom," said the Commissioner. "Mr. Ruthledge is the president of the Marine & Commerce Bank."

"A good man to know," acknowledged the Inspector. Ruthledge smiled.

The Commissioner continued. "He has come to see me in a rather disturbing matter."

Carruthers extracted his indispensable pipe and looked questioningly at the two men.

"The bank is very concerned about a number of shortages."

"Shortages?" asked Carruthers.

Ruthledge nodded.

"But isn't this rather a matter for your auditors?"

"As a rule...yes," said Ruthledge.

"Why come to the police, then?" asked Carruthers. "Where there's a shortage, there's an embezzler. Your experts are in a much better position than police to determine who had access to the missing funds, who had the opportunity to embezzle and to falsify the records. Especially in an organization like a bank, it is usually very easy to pinpoint the embezzler. Just lay the charge...we will take it from there."

Ruthledge seemed uneasy. He cleared his throat. "You don't understand, Inspector; there's no suspect."

"No suspect?"

"No suspect, Inspector; only shortages. The whole thing is crazy."

"I should say so," agreed Carruthers.

The Commissioner looked disapprovingly at the Inspector. "Now look here, Tom; don't jump to hasty conclusions. Let Mr. Ruthledge tell you the whole story in his own words."

"All right," mumbled Carruthers, lighting his pipe with a gadget reminiscent of the war of Manila. The flame nearly burned his small iron-gray mustache off his upper lip.

RUTHLEDGE cleared his throat again. "The shortages are small in terms of money; but it is the frequency in which they occur which bothers us," he said. "So far, no great damage has been done, but we don't want any adverse publicity; we don't want to scare our clients; and we don't want to incriminate any of our employees. But something has to be done."

"Suppose we get down to facts," suggested Carruthers, "then we can discuss the ethical aspect of the matter."

"Well," said Ruthledge, "here are the facts. We have 38 branches in the metropolitan area; our fiscal year ended last month. A few weeks ago, the statements of all the 38 branches were compiled for our annual report to the shareholders. Before sending the copy to print, the office of the secretary-treasurer checked it once more. Merely by accident it was found that every branch has had a shortage at one time or other during the last four months."

"*Every* branch?" asked Carruthers interestedly.

"Yes, every branch."

"Funny," said Carruthers.

"And what's more...the amounts were identical. In each case it was a shortage of 99 dollars."

"Hm," mumbled the Inspector, "99

dollars...interesting. But why didn't you report this to us before?"

"I couldn't; I didn't know about it. You see, small shortages are strictly a matter for the local branch manager; he deals with them without notifying the head office. There are occasional mistakes and errors...especially before holiday weekends, on paydays when the tellers are busier than usual. They *do* make mistakes; after all, they are only human."

"What do you usually do in such a case?"

"Well...the teller is responsible for the shortage. The missing amount is charged to his or her account—as the case may be—and taken off the salary in a lump sum, or in installments—with interest, of course."

"Of course," murmured Carruthers.

"I beg your pardon?"

"Never mind, Mr. Ruthledge. I was only thinking out loud; a bad habit of mine," said Carruthers. The Commissioner gave him a reproving look.

The Inspector remained silent. Heavy smoke rose from his pipe. At last, he asked: "I presume the individual branch managers considered the incidents rather as a routine matter, and didn't report to the head office?"

"That's right, Inspector; besides, they couldn't know about similar shortages in other branches. They had no reason to suspect anything out of the ordinary. As I said, it was only by accident that the whole picture was discovered a few days ago."

The Inspector fell back into silence. The problem intrigued him; for some reason, the story had opened the door to a small chamber in his mind where he had stored a bit of information received at some time in the past. Something, somebody had told him at some time, had some relation to Ruthledge's story. At present, however, it was too intangible for a possible connection; he couldn't put his finger on it.

"Very interesting," he said out loud. "Very interesting. Any ideas who did it?"

Ruthledge shrugged. "Would I be here if I had any ideas?"

Carruthers grinned. "Well... I'll try my best to help you. I'll be at your office first thing tomorrow morning. Get me a list of the tellers involved in the shortages; I'm afraid it will mean a lot of leg-work."

AFTER Ruthledge had left, Carruthers stayed with the Commissioner. As usual, the two men remained silent with their thoughts. "Well," the Commissioner broke the silence, "what's your verdict?"

"Odd, pretty odd, if you ask me."

"Odd is not the right word," said the Commissioner. "It's a coincidence. A funny thing to happen to a bank."

The wording of this last phrase made something click in the Inspector's mind. The door to the tiny compartment in his mind had sprung wide open, releasing a bit of information stored away for use at some later time. He saw a bartender who counted reluctantly 19 one-dollar bills on a liquid-stained counter.

"The most funny thing happened on the way to the office," he murmured.

"What did you say?" asked the Commissioner.

"Never mind," said Carruthers. "I was just thinking out loud. A bad habit, you know."

The Commissioner shook his head disgustedly as the door closed on the Inspector.

Inspector Carruthers' hunch that the investigation would require a lot of leg-work turned out to be true. In the days following Mr. Ruthledge's visit to headquarters, he questioned 38 tellers of both sexes. He examined bank records; he took statements; he compared signatures on thousands of cheques and vouchers, until regiments of dollar-signs followed him deep into the realms of his dreams. He explored

every avenue, including the possibility of an inside job. After three weeks of painstaking detail work, he stood exactly where he had been at the outset.

In the middle of the investigation, an alarm came in from a branch which had reported a shortage previously; another 99 dollar discrepancy had come to light at the daily close of books. Carruthers rushed to the branch in the suburbs of the city.

THIS TIME, the victim had been a young man, a teller with the bank for more than three years. According to his superiors, his record was excellent, his background impeccable, and his honesty beyond any possible doubt.

His story lacked any clues, just as the stories all other tellers had told. However, he complained of a heavy headache and claimed, that at one time during his work, he had felt slightly faint; but he had overcome this feeling in short order. When he had prepared his cash at the end of business, he found himself short of 99 dollars; that was all. He didn't have the faintest idea where the money had gone. A disappointed Inspector left the branch, and a more disappointed bankteller prepared himself to see 99 dollars deducted from his future salary.

Carruthers drove out to the branch where Peggy Webster was employed as a teller. So far, she had been the only person able to throw a little light on the mechanics of these inexplicable happenings. Peggy had preserved a hazy recollection of a man who had come to her wicket, just before she had fainted—on the day she had been short 99 dollars. She couldn't remember just what kind of business she transacted with the stranger, but the memory of the man's eyes had frightened her.

"Was there anything else?" the Inspector urged.

The blonde girl concentrated. "No. Inspector, nothing I can think of."

"Think hard, Peggy; wasn't there the mention of a bill, a banknote of some denomination?"

"A banknote....? Funny that you should mention it. I wasn't too sure until now...but there was something in connection with a dollar bill. I can't remember...quite...just what it was. But...but what has that got to do with a 99 dollar shortage?"

"I don't know...yet. Now...Peggy...think again...there *was* a dollar bill...?"

"Yes...." Peggy said hesitantly. "yes...very vaguely I can see it... there was a dollar bill."

"I thought so," Carruthers told her and started for his car.

THE COMMISSIONER looked up as Carruthers walked into his office. "Found anything, Tom?" he asked.

"No," said Carruthers, "not yet... except..."

"Except what?"

"Except...that it is not an inside job."

"Clever, clever, Inspector," the Commissioner didn't attempt to hide the sarcasm in his voice. "Very clever deduction. I just had a phone call from the State & National Bank. They, too, have discovered a series of 99 dollar shortages in their branches. The whole extent isn't known yet; they can't explain it."

"Neither can I," admitted Carruthers, "but I have a hunch."

"What hunch?"

"Too fantastic to talk about at present. I'll tell you later," said Carruthers and slammed the door behind him.

Dr. Armstrong, the medico-legal expert sat in his office among his laboratory equipment. Carruthers moved a few microscope slides out of the way and pulled up a stool. "Doc," he asked,

"what do you know about hypnotism?"

The doctor seemed amused. "Is the stage luring you, Tom? Carruthers the Great! The hypnotist wonder of our age! What's cooking?"

The Inspector ignored the doctor. "What do you know about it, Doc?"

"Not too much," admitted the other; "I would say...the basic facts."

"Don't need an expert for that," grumbled Carruthers. "I have already found the basic facts in the encyclopedia. But tell me all you know; I have a hunch I'll need it."

"Well," said the doctor, "there isn't very much. Most of it is still pretty well unexplored. Basically, the hypnotic state is characterized by heightened suggestibility."

Carruthers grinned. "Let's stick to plain English, Doc," he proposed. "I take it that under hypnosis you could be made to do certain things against your own wish...and without knowing it?"

"That's right. A person could be induced to do things without remembering it afterwards. However, it has been said that under hypnosis, you cannot be forced to commit actions to which your character is fundamentally opposed. Murder for instance, in most people's cases. But then again, this theory has not been proved to the satisfaction of science. During a series of experiments, persons in trance, have been made to shoot at other human beings—with blanks, of course, but they didn't know at the time that they were shooting blanks. For all we know, you are liable to do anything in the hands of a capable hypnotist."

"Without remembering?"

"Without remembering. Actually what happens is that your mind blanks out. It short-circuits under the spell of the hypnotist; your actions don't register in your memory apparatus. For the length of the trance you become an automaton, a puppet without visible strings."

"Any aftereffects?"

"Not necessarily. Susceptible persons were known to have felt dizzy afterwards; some excessively tired. Some cases of light hysteria have occured, headaches, nausea, even fainting...but as a rule no serious aftereffects have been reported. Many persons come out of a trance as fresh as a daisy, although very bewildered when told what they had been doing."

"Well...that checks," said Carruthers softly. And loud: "How do you acquire the faculty? What is it? A natural gift...or something you can learn?"

"Difficult question," admitted the doctor. "Opinions on the subject vary. People have been born with the gift, no doubt, but it can be acquired. Hypnotism is taught in every medical school; in fact, it is often used in the treatment of hysteria and other nervous disorders. Come to think of it... there are even mail-order courses in hypnotism. Certain comic books are full of such advertisements. You know the kind. Seven easy lessons for 5 dollars. If not satisfactory your money refunded. Not that anyone could learn that way, unless he already knew most of it."

Carruthers jumped up. His usually so-placid face showed excitement.

"What's the matter?" asked the doctor. "Did anything bite you?"

"No...not exactly. I was just thinking."

"You don't say."

"I was just thinking," Carruthers told him, "that you can get the right answer if you are smart enough to ask the right questions!"

IT WAS a very disturbed Commissioner who stormed into Carruthers' office. The Inspector and his man Friday, Sergeant Bill Shillings, were deeply engrossed in the perusal of piles of multi-colored comic books.

The Commissioner froze at the sight.

"For crying out loud!" he exploded as soon as he had recovered. "Small wonder we don't solve crimes any more around here. What is this...? A police department or a kindergarten? Well...doesn't anyone say anything? What are you two morons doing here?"

Carruthers looked up, undisturbed. "One question at the time, John," he said. "What do you want to know first?"

The Commissioner's eyes popped from their sockets but he checked himself valiantly. The pressure subsided slowly.

"Ruthledge just phoned. Confound it...the market branch of his bank has just reported a shortage of 198 dollars." The Commissioner took a deep breath. "He asked me if we are still in business, or if he should call in the boy scouts. I wonder what he meant by that."

"Don't try to figure it out, John."

"Confound it...!" the pressure was rising again.

"Easy...easy, John. It fits. 198 and two makes 200."

"Genius," was all the Commissioner was able to say.

"Don't you see, John? It fits!"

"It fits...what?"

"It fits into the whole puzzle... don't you see?"

"I see nothing! I only see that you have gone crazy. How long do you think is this city going to pay you for reading comic books?" The Commissioner reached for the few remaining hairs on his scalp. "Good Lord! He is reading comic books while this town is becoming a paradise for criminals!"

Carruthers was not impressed. "Sit down, John. I am trying to do some work and you are much too noisy. Here...while I make a few phone calls, read this book. Very enlightening...should be read by every policeman. Dick Tracy."

Before the Commissioner could react, Carruthers had lifted the receiver.

Three days passed, before the Inspector's phone calls began to bear any fruits. Then, one by one, the letters he had been expecting started to arrive. They came from different police-departments across the country which he had contacted with a very peculiar request. He had compiled the names of all advertisers, offering courses in hypnotism through the mails and then, he had asked the po-

lice of the places where the schools were located, to procure a list of their customers. He had emphasized that he was especially interested in those who had joined the course during the last twelve months. Now the lists arrived.

For the next three days, Carruthers and Bill Shillings were busy checking on the persons contained in the lists whose addresses were reasonably close to the city. As was to be expected most of the customers turned out to be children. After Carruthers had interviewed the last prospect on the list, a miniature cowboy who, during the length of the interrogation hadn't come down from his eagle's nest in a tree, he gave up, hot and perspiring.

"Seems we are on the wrong track," remarked Bill Shillings as he drove the cruiser back to headquarters.

"Maybe," admitted Carruthers, "maybe we are wrong; maybe not. Just let's keep on plugging. We will get a break yet. It's the law of averages, Bill. Besides, my theory is much too good to be wrong; if I have a hunch, I have a hunch!"

"Sure," said Bill Shillings who weighed 250 pounds and was a man of few words.

IT IS NOT quite clear whether it was the workings of the law of averages or the result of Carruther's hunch, but back at headquarters two pieces of information were waiting for the Inspector. The first was the news that another bank branch had found itself 297 dollars poorer; the crook seemed to have stepped up his pace. The second item was a long list from a city in the East, containing several thousand names. On this list, the Inspector's sympathizing correspondent had encircled one name by means of a red pencil. The name was Robert Hawkins; he had subscribed to the course about six months before. As address, he had given the name of the State Penitentiary, only a few short miles from where Carruthers was sitting at the moment.

Bill Shillings was watching the inspector dreamily. It was a hot day. "The hunchback of Notre Dame had a hunch, too, come to think of it," he said.

Carruthers looked up from the list over which he had been meditating. "You are thinking too much, Bill. Cops only think in detective stories. Better get the car...we are going places!"

Bill grinned. "You didn't have another hunch, Inspector?"

"I sure had," bellowed Carruthers; "and get going, blockhead!"

The warden greeted Inspector Carruthers like an old friend. "Bob Hawkins? Sure I remember him. Good old Mandrake."

"What did you say?" interrupted Carruthers.

"Oh... I forgot. The inmates used to call him Mandrake, the Magician. He drove his cellmates crazy with his experiments. Hawkins studied hypnotism and tried to hypnotize everybody. I gave him eight days solitary once, after he had tried to hypnotize the turnkey. That cured him."

Carruthers leaned back in his chair and heaved a sigh of relief. *Just keep on plugging,* he thought. *Keep on plugging and you will get your break. It's the old law of average.*

Snapping out of his thoughts he asked: "Did you ever give him permission to subscribe to a mail order course in hypnotism?"

"Yes..." the warden told him, "yes, I did. I couldn't very well refuse; he was a model prisoner up to then. But this crazy notion of his, of becoming a hypnotist got him deep into trouble; it made him ineligible for parole. He served his full term."

"So he wanted to become a hypnotist," mumbled Carruthers. He turned to the warden. "What else do you know about Hawkins? What was he in for?"

"If I remember right...forgery. He

used to be a bank accountant with a pretty good record until he started to fool around with fictitious accounts; he got two years as a first offender."

"Hm," said Carruthers. "He had been a bank accountant; that makes sense." He rose. "Thanks warden, you have been a big help; I can get the rest of the story from our own files."

IMMEDIATELY upon his return to headquarters, Carruthers had the Hawkins file brought to his office. Pictures and a full description of the man went out to every financial institution in the city. The branch-managers were warned to be on the look-out for a small, mousy man, with quiet, soft-spoken manners. Extra police were posted in the vicinity of all bank branches to apprehend the suspect should he show himself.

This well-intended move had an immediate, although unexpected effect. The following day, Hawkins was spotted in 26 places at about the same time. Nine irate, small and mousy men, were delivered at headquarters, where they not only protested their innocence in violent language, but threatened police with suits for false arrest as well. The newspapers had a field day, and the Commissioner was furious; the real Hawkins was conspicuous through his absence.

A search of all boarding houses and places ex-convicts used to frequent, turned out to be fruitless. The city with its teeming millions had swallowed up the little man.

Inspector Carruthers emerged from the door of the television studio and started across the street for a pay-phone.

"Commissioner," he barked into the mouthpiece, "can you meet me at Dr. Armstrong's office in twenty minutes?"

"Yes... I suppose so. What do you want me for?"

"It's the shortage case."

"Tom..." the Commissioner's voice was apprehensive, "Tom...don't tell me you are breaking the case. I hope you are sure."

"I'm only sure of death and taxes," said Carruthers and hung up.

The three men settled in Dr. Armstrong's littered study. The Inspector opened the meeting.

"Doctor," he said, "I need your expert opinion."

"Another one of your hunches?" asked the doctor, sympathetically.

Carruthers ignored him. "Take the case of a small, unimportant man," he said, "a man who has spent his life in the background. He had no personality, no talent he knows of. He is middle-aged and in all his years no woman has ever looked at him twice. He thinks himself a failure and he even gets into trouble with the law and is sent up for larceny. He sees his life running out on him without having achieved a single thing. Do you follow me, doctor?"

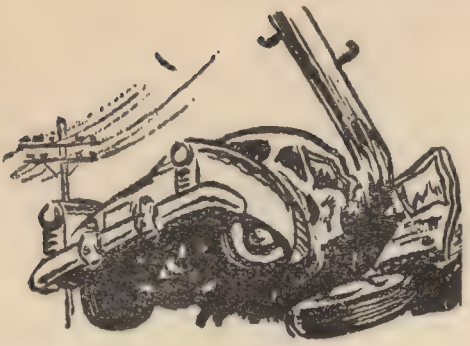
The other nodded.

"Well...all of a sudden, this man discovers that he has an amazing gift. Quite by accident, he finds in himself a natural talent he has never dreamt he had. He, the little mousy character, the non-entity, discovers that he can be a hypnotist, a man able to impose his will on other persons, including those who have always looked down on him. Do you still follow me?"

"I do," said the doctor, "although I'll be darned if I know what you are getting at."

Carruthers grinned and consulted his watch. "You will...you will...in just another minute." He rose and crossed to the corner of the room where the doctor kept a small television receiver. He flicked the switch. Reluctantly, the screen lit up in the very middle of a commercial which, however, after a short time, gave way to the image of an announcer. Carruthers turned the volume up.

"Ladies and Gentlemen," boomed the announcer, "I have the pleasure of bringing you a special message. This



station, always on the lookout for new talent, has decided to organize a new and quite unusual contest. There is a great number of amateur magicians and hypnotists among our listeners. Now...listen carefully...this is their chance! This contest, of which you the people will be the judge, will produce a winner whom we are going to guarantee a one-year contract as a jumping-off board to stardom. Contestants are invited, as of now, to write in..."

Carruthers shut off the set and walked back to his chair. The two other men looked at him with undisguised surprise.

CARRUTHERS took his time. After he had produced his pre-historic lighter and set his pipe afire, he looked at the doctor.

"Well, coming back to our little frustrated hypnotist," he said, "in your opinion, Doc, how would such a person react to the offer you have just heard?"

The doctor weighed the question in his mind. "This," he finally said, slowly, "this belongs in the domain of psychology; I am not too competent in such matters. But off-hand, I would say that nine out of ten persons of the type described by you, would write in to the station."

"I thought so," murmured Carruthers.

The Commissioner had shown signs of increasing impatience. "Do I seem too impertinent," he broke in without disguising his disgust, "if I beg you to explain just what you two were gabbing about?"

"Very simple, John. We were discussing hypnotism."

"Hypnotism!" the Commissioner exploded. "Are you going on television as a hypnotist? If that's what you want to do...let me tell you right now and here that I am not going to stand for this nonsense. As long as I am the head of the department, no policeman is going to make a fool out of himself in front of the whole country. Get it!"

Carruthers suppressed a grin and blinked at Dr. Armstrong. "Now, look here, John, you got it all wrong; I am trying to solve the shortage case."

"What has that got to do with your crazy talk about hypnotism and that little mouse of a man?"

"Just a hunch, John."

The Commissioner's blood pressure neared the danger mark. When he banged his fist on the desk, Dr. Armstrong's test tubes sang a merry jingle. "You are stark crazy...and so are your hunches!"

The Inspector became suddenly earnest. "Listen John...so far, we have had approximately 50 cases of strange shortages. Right?"

"54," corrected the Commissioner.

"All-right, 54. Now...the pattern of each of these 54 cases was exactly the same. Every time it was a shortage of 99 dollars, or a multiple amount of 99. Most of the time, the teller in the case, experienced some kind of a malaise...a headache...dizziness. One, Peggy Webster, even fainted. Now... these symptoms are common aftereffects observed in people who had been under hypnotic inlfuence. Right, Doctor?"

Dr. Armstrong agreed.

"This Peggy Webster I have been telling you about, remembers a small man with stinging eyes. He had come to her wicket shortly before she blacked out."

"So what?" the Commissioner wanted to know. "There are millions of

small men. And what do you call stinging eyes? This borders on superstition. Good Lord, the girl is crazy —just as crazy as your theory."

IF THE Inspector was impressed he didn't show it. "Well," he continued, "I have located a small man who fits the description Peggy Webster gave me. His name is Robert Hawkins; he served two years for forging bank records and embezzling money. While in prison, he subscribed to a mail order course in hypnotism and he did fairly well at it. He had some success with his cellmates; the warden threw the book at him for trying his skill on the turnkey. He is out of jail now; but," he added melancholically, "I haven't found him yet."

"Interesting," the Commissioner said sarcastically. "And this Hawkins walked into the banks, hypnotized the tellers in front of everybody, took the money, and walked out again?"

"Yes...that's what it looks like."

"Malarkey," decided the Commissioner. "A fairy tale if I've ever heard one."

Carruthers was amused. "No, John; it stands to reason. I am convinced Hawkins did it, and I even know how he did it."

"Well...?"

"He walked up to the teller with a one-dollar bill. His suggestive power made the teller accept it as a one-hundred dollar bill. He asked for ten-dollar bills in exchange; it's as simple as that."

The Commissioner sneered. "It's as simple as that."

"Yes, and what's more, it explains the odd shortage of 99 dollars in each case. The teller kept the one-dollar bill and handed out one-hundred dollars which resulted in a 99 dollar loss for the bank."

"Far-fetched," said the Commissioner; "can't be done."

"Well, doctor?"

"It's far-fetched, all right; but not impossible. It's impossible for just anybody at all to become a hypnotist by reading a mail order study course; not everyone could learn the knack even with intense study. You have to have a certain natural aptitude—and a few, a very few people have such a powerful natural aptitude that they need very little training, if any at all."

The Commissioner turned purple. "Are you two pulling my leg? You know very well you can't be hypnotized against your own will."

"So...you think you cannot be hypnotized if you don't agree to it?"

"That's what I mean; the man isn't born yet to put me in a trance."

"You wouldn't risk a small wager on that—or would you?" asked Carruthers suavely.

The test tubes on the doctor's desk jingled dangerously under the Commissioner's fist. "Any time—any time! Just to prove that you are two darn fools!"

"All right," said Carruthers turning to the doctor. "You told me, Doc, they taught you hypnotism in medical

school; do you think you could put the Commissioner to sleep?"

This time it was the doctor's turn to suppress a grin. "Well," he said cautiously, "I think he would make a good medium."

"You think you can hypnotize me?"

"Frankly, yes."

"And I tell you that you cannot!"

The doctor shrugged. "I am not going to argue with you, Commissioner. Let me prove it to you."

The Commissioner stared from the doctor to the Inspector and back to the doctor. "This I want to see," he said, indignantly.

Dr. Armstrong rose to his feet and approached the Commissioner's chair...

THE COMMISSIONER resembled a statue. Only the contraction of his cheek muscles showed his strain. His eyes were wide open. Ten seconds passed, fifteen, twenty, nothing happened. Then the statue blinked, blinked again, and with a small sigh, the Commissioner closed his eyes. The doctor waited a few more seconds. "You are asleep, Commissioner," he said softly. "Open your eyes!"

The Commissioner blinked again. Then he opened his eyes and stared emptily at the doctor.

Dr. Armstrong turned to Carruthers. "Well, I did it, Tom."

The Inspector grinned. "Why don't you teach him a lesson?"

The idea seemed to amuse the doctor. He reached for a small jar with red dye and deposited it on the desk within easy reach of the Commissioner. Then he turned to his victim.

His voice was soft. "Commissioner, can you hear me?"

"Yes," said the sleeping man hesitantly but without any intonation, "yes, I can hear you."

"You will obey me, Commissioner."

"I will obey you," the other repeated.

"Listen carefully, Commissioner; you are an Indian chief."

"Indian chief."

"The members of your tribe paint their faces red."

"Faces red."

"Here is a jar with red paint... paint your face!"

With puppet-like motions, the Commissioner reached for the jar. Dipping his right index into the paint, he applied it liberally to his cheeks and forehead. Carruthers grinned broadly.

"That's enough."

The Commissioner obeyed.

The doctor fastened his eyes once more on those of his victim. "Commissioner, when you wake up you will have no memory of what you just did. Do you understand?"

"No memory when I wake up."

"I am going to count to ten. At ten you will wake up. Now, close your eyes." The statue closed its eyes. With his painted face the Commissioner had a strange resemblance to an ancient Aztec image. The doctor counted slowly. When he reached ten, the Commissioner opened his eyes. He stared at the doctor who was still standing in the same position as he had at the beginning of the seance.

Slowly, the Commissioner raised his hand to his eyes as though he wanted to chase a spider web. "What did I tell you?" he asked triumphantly. "It can't be done. I told you you are crazy!"

The doctor exchanged glances with the Inspector. Carruthers bit his lip to hide a grin. "John," he said amiably, "over there in the corner is a washbasin and a mirror. Do me a favor; look in the mirror."

"If this is another of your jokes," the Commissioner started but he changed his mind. Something told him it wasn't a joke. He walked over to the mirror. For a long time he looked at his image and the two others expected one of his violent outbursts at any moment. But nothing happened.

Instead, he took a towel, opened the hotwater tap, and cleaned his face. When, at last, he turned around, he was smiling. "My hat is off to you, Tom," he said. "Some people have to learn the hard way; I give you carte blanche with Hawkins."

He wasn't smiling any more as he roared: "And if you tell any living soul what you did to me—so help me —I'll have you fired from the force so darn fast you'll never know what hit you!" He slammed the door only to reappear immediately. "And without pension!"

The explosion of the slamming door brought a rain of plaster down on the heads of the two men.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT on television had been synchronized with similar announcements in the daily papers. The result was beyond the Inspector's expectations; weary mailmen dumped bag after bag on the studio's receiving desk. It was amazing just how many part-time magicians and hypnotists the country had produced.

Carruthers and Bill Shillings went through every letter. There was none from Robert Hawkins. Late in the afternoon, Carruthers rubbed his smarting eyes and declared defeat.

"Bill," he said, despondently, "it's no good; he didn't swallow the bait."

Shillings agreed. "Let's quit, Inspector; there'll be another day."

But Carruthers was still meditating. "I thought I was a good judge of human nature. I was so sure he would write in."

"Well," said Bill, "maybe he has—under another name."

Carruthers stared at his right-hand man. "Good Lord, Bill! How could I have been so stupid? Quick; get me the handwriting samples from Hawkins' file."

It meant two more hours for the two men, but then luck smiled. There was a letter whose handwriting was decidedly that of Hawkins. It was signed Richard Holbrook, the address given, an apartment house in a fashionable district of the city.

"Richard Holbrook," Carruthers mumbled, "initials R. H. . . .the same as for Robert Hawkins. Funny how often they will do it."

"You are an ace," commented the admiring Bill Shillings.

"I guess you're right; I am the second best detective in the whole wide world," admitted Carruthers.

"The second best...? Who's first?"

"Man name of Sherlock Holmes."

"Sherlock Holmes? But, but he doesn't exist...he is fictional."

"That's why," explained Carruthers modestly.

THE POLICE car, Bill Shillings behind the wheel, stopped opposite the apartment house. It was one of these modern structures, ten stories high, with two flats on every floor. Carruthers went inside to check the names on the mailboxes.

A few moments later, he was back at the car. "Apartment 8B. The one to the right on the eighth floor. See the four windows up there?"

Bill nodded.

"He isn't in. I tried the buzzer; no answer." Carruthers slid into the front seat next to the sergeant. The two men settled in silence waiting for their prey.

It was a long wait. Darkness descended slowly on the city and the street lights came on. The minutes passed, turning into hours. They waited in silence. It was shortly after midnight when a taxi pulled up in front of the apartment house. A small man got out. As he turned to pay the driver, the light of a lamp fell on his profile.

"That's him," murmured Carruthers; "that's Hawkins."

They watched him enter the building. After a few minutes, two windows on the eighth floor flared up. The yellow rectangles stood out clearly in the

otherwise dark facade of the building.

Carruthers moved. "Listen, Bill," he said, "I am going to find a telephone; I want Peggy Webster here to identify him. You hold the fort in the meantime."

"O. K," said Bill and Carruthers disappeared behind a corner.

It was only a few minutes later when Bill heard a faint click from the direction of the entrance. A second later, the door opened and a small figure appeared, a suitcase in his hand. It was Hawkins.

It was amazing to see how fast a man of Bill Shillings' size could cross the street. He accosted the small man. "Hey...you! Going somewhere?" he bellowed.

The man stopped and turned his head. "I beg your pardon?"

"Where are you going?"

"What is it to you?"

"Don't act smart, Hawkins," Bill disclosed his badge. "Police!"

"My name is Holbrook, Richard Holbrook, not Hawkins."

"Same thing," decided Bill Shillings. "You just stay here; the Inspector will be here any minute."

There was a fleeting expression of uneasiness on the other's face, but his voice was calm. "Look here, officer, I haven't done anything."

"Never mind; you just wait here." And to emphasize his words, the sergeant produced his gun. Hawkins eyed it with obvious disgust.

There was a short, apprehensive moment of silence. Then, Hawkins, stepped towards Shillings. "Officer," he said amiably, "I will miss my train..." He was now only a short distance from the giant sergeant, who towered over him like a mountain. His eyes found those of Bill Shillings. He stopped talking.

Bill saw these cold eyes and the two pin-point shaped pupils and he had a curious sensation. He felt his spine tingle as though a long-legged spider was running up and down his back. He didn't like it. Trying to divert his eyes, he found he couldn't do it and he didn't like this either. "I... I don't care about your darn train," he managed to articulate with a heavy tongue and then he closed his eyes.

Hawkins looked rapidly up and down the street. "You are asleep," he whispered. "Do you hear me?"

"Yes," mumbled Bill, "I hear you."

"Come with me!"

Bill, reluctantly, turned and followed Hawkins back to the door of the building. They disappeared behind the door. Bill, clumsily, brushed against the frame and the gun fell from his hand. The floor mat absorbed the noise of its fall; neither Hawkins nor Bill were aware of it.

A FEW moments later, Carruthers turned the corner, approached the car to find the sergeant gone.

"What the devil is he doing?" he asked himself, annoyed. The light was still on in the two windows on the eighth floor. He scratched his head under his soft hat and walked towards the door of the apartment house, undecided as to his next step. It was only by accident that his foot stepped

on Bill's gun. The blue steel of the gun did not reflect the street lights.

He stooped to pick up the weapon when terrible fear invaded him. This was all, Carruthers needed to spring into action. He tried the door; it was locked. Pressing his finger hard against the button which activated the bell to the janitor's quarters, he didn't let go until he heard shuffling sounds from inside.

The door opened a few inches, gave way to a face and an enraged voice. "What the hell is going on?" the voice inquired. "Stop this racket or I'll phone the police!"

Carruthers pushed the door wide open. "No need for that; I'm the police!" Grabbing the old man, he dragged him bodily to the elevator. "Quick! Get me up to the eighth!"

The elevator ride seemed endless. Tension mounted in Carruthers, prompted by his fear for Bill Shillings. While he didn't know just what had happened to the sergeant, he could conjure up a few ideas, none of them pleasant. Bill, even without a weapon, was not helpless. He had two good fists, backed by 250 pounds of solid bone and muscle. But Hawkins with his uncanny gift...the Inspector shuddered. At last, the elevator came to a well-oiled stop on the eighth floor. The automatic door opened with exasperating slowness.

With a speed and dexterity, unexpected in a man of Carruthers' age, the Inspector moved down the hallway. A carpet silenced his footfalls. Bill's gun was still in his hand and he released the safety catch. Reaching the door of 8B, he pressed his ear against it. The janitor had caught up to him, breathing heavily. Carruthers motioned him to silence.

Behind the door, only muffled sounds could be distinguished. After a while, however, Carruthers was able to single out a few words, spoken in a soft, persuasive tone. His fingers pressed harder against the gun butt, while he listened.

"Officer," he heard the voice say, "open the window."

From the following medley of sounds, Carruthers guessed that Bill had done as told.

The voice started again. "Officer... do you hear me?"

Carruthers heard Bill mumble, "I hear you."

"You will do as I tell you."

"I will do as you tell me," parroted Bill.

"There is a garden outside; you see the garden, don't you?"

"I see the garden."

"Flowers and trees."

"Flowers and trees."

"You like to walk in a garden, don't you?"

"I like to walk in a garden."

"Then just step up, and go out..."

CARRUTHERS didn't wait any longer. He stepped back three paces and threw himself with all his force against the panel of the door, praying desperately that the builder had economized by using light material. His prayers were answered; the door gave with the noise of an exploding shell. Carruthers was propelled into the room among splinters of smashed lumber; his impetus threw him to the floor.

Hawkins saw the Inspector fly into the room and stood frozen for the fraction of a second. Then, with the ferocity of a tigercat, he jumped toward the window whose frame was filled with Bill Shillings' bulk; the small man's face was distorted with violent rage as he attempted to push the sergeant out into space.

In this second, Carruthers remembered a cowboy movie in which the hero had fired his sixshooter from the hip. "Good Lord," he thought, "show me how to do it!" And still lying on the floor, he fired. Hawkins, hit, reeled away from Bill, doubled up, and press-

ing both hands against his stomach, spiraled slowly to the floor.

In another second, Carruthers was at the window, helping the sergeant to safety. Bill was still in a haze; three glasses of cold water, thrown into his face, brought a facsimile of reason back into his eyes.

In the corner of the room, Hawkins winced in pain. The Inspector gave him a quick going over. "He will live." he said, and turning to Bill Shillings who was still trying to figure out how he ever got into the apartment, he bellowed: "Get the ambulance... sleepwalker!"

THE SMOKE in the Commissioner's office was so thick a knife could have cut it.

"Tom," the old official said, "I owe you an apology. I really thought you were off your rocker when you started this hypnotism business. How did you ever get the idea?"

"It was the old formula, John."

"The old formula?"

"Yes. Ninety percent genius...and a hunch."

"Malarkey. You and your hunches."

"Don't laugh; I just had another hunch."

"Another hunch?"

"Yes. I have a hunch you will be in the doghouse as soon as you get home."

"What makes you think so?" The Commissioner was alarmed.

"Well, remember that bar down the street?"

"Yes, what of it?"

"Where you first saw Hawkins try his trick on the bartender?"

"Yes."

"Well, I passed it an hour ago and looked through the window; I saw you sitting there."

The Commissioner reached for the paperweight in front of him and pulled it close.

The Inspector was undisturbed. "You had three glasses in front of you; two empty, one half full."

The Commissioner lifted the paperweight. "Get out," he said, "get out...and stay out!"

★

2 THRILLING NOVELS

• WAR AT THE CIRCLE S
by Seven Anderton

• RETURN FIRE
by Gordon D. Shirreffs

lead off the September

ACTION - PACKED
WESTERN

All right, so I got breaks now and then — good breaks, I'll admit. But even then, I might have let a killer slip right out of my fingers if I hadn't been on the ball, ready to take advantage of the breaks.

LUCKY LUDLOW

by Wade B. Rubottom

JUST PAST Diamond Head Lighthouse, my Plymouth sputtered to a stop. I swore under my breath. Already I could hear my wife confessing: "I forgot to fill the gas tank."

I swore some more, rubbed yesterday's shave, and listened to the rain. Huge drops, jam-packed and cloud high, beat the car.

Time is always of the essence in tracking down a murderer. Often it's a matter of minutes. Seconds. It's always a matter of luck.

And I had used my own car to save time.

They call me *Lucky* Ludlow. The first Honolulu homicide in months and I'm late. Pfluger will have the case wrapped up before I get there. He'd like that. How he would like that. There's nothing like having your assistant bucking for your job to keep you on your toes.

That's what I had to do—get on my toes. Toe and heel myself to the scene of the crime. There wasn't likely to be a car going my way—or any way. Week-night traffic is not heavy here after midnight.

I opened the car door and pushed into the rain.

When two headlights curved into view, I snapped on my flashlight. The car was Waikiki-bound, but I didn't care. Honolulu motorists are generally helpful.

I swung the flash below my belt like a lantern. A light grey Chevie eased past. Stopped. I pushed my badge and flashlight toward the car's lowering window. "Ludlow, detective, Homicide."

"What is it, Sergeant?" His voice was deep.

"I ran out of gas. I need a lift—

about a mile from here—not your way."

Under my flashlight beam and his Panama hat, I could see the guy trying to make up his mind. "Yeah, sure, Sergeant. Get in out of the rain."

I opened the back door, shoved some display advertising cards aside and sat down.

He U-turned, speeded up his windshield wipers, and asked, "What's the trouble?"

"Homicide. We don't get many of them here." To make conversation, I added, "See you work for Proctor and Gamble."

"What?"

"These display cards." I unconsciously pointed with my flashlight and automatically pressed the switch.

"Oh. Yeah. Sure."

I pondered that a bit. "How's business?"

"Can't complain."

I continued to ponder his working for Proctor and Gamble.

"Slow up a bit, I think we turn soon." We passed Kaalawai. "Turn right on Kulamanu, the next street... Here we are. Park behind that police car. Thanks."

MATT WILLETS came from the house.

"Matt," I said, "I ran out of gas. This man gave me a lift; sit in here and keep him company while I'm inside."

"Hey! What is this?" the guy demanded. "You don't need me. I want to go home."

"Sure. Don't we all? This is no night to be out. But stick here just a minute; I'll be back."

Inside the entrance hall, tall, lean, and hard Tom Pfluger had a telephone receiver clamped to his ear. His black, bead-like eyes shifted from me to his wristwatch and back to me again.

At the foot of the stairs lay a man in a blue linen dressing robe. He was about sixty-five. His grey hair was blood-stained. His right hand clutched a snub-nosed .38. It wasn't the murder weapon. The murder weapon—a paint-decorated calabash—lay on the floor, about twenty inches from the victim's head.

"Dead," Pfluger said, cradling the phone. "I've called the boys. Burglary and murder—looks like to me." He pointed to a desk in the living room. Drawers had been pulled out. Their contents cluttered the floor. An open green tin box set on the blotter pad. "Burglar slugged owner as he came downstairs."

Pfluger had it all figured out. He'd been hurrying before I got there. "Mrs. Hellers said her husband always kept a thousand dollars in the desk; it's gone. She didn't see the burglar. She awakened when his car roared away and noticed her husband wasn't in his twin bed. She came down, found him dead, phoned headquarters. She's upstairs now— I thought it would be better."

"Good work, Pfluger, you got everything." I meant it; the guy was good. "Bring in the killer. I want to talk to him."

"I want to talk to him, too. You bring him in." Pfluger's white teeth flashed in his dark face. "This is going to be a pip. No witnesses. No clues. No nothing."

"If that's the case, I agree with you, but I don't think that's the case. I'll have the killer handcuffed in a few minutes." It was a rash statement; I regretted making it.

"If you do," Pfluger sneered, "it'll be a new record even for *Lucky* Ludlow."

I let that go by. "After you passed me on Diamond Head Road, I ran out of gas. I flagged down a motorist. Matt's with him outside. I've kept him long enough. I should either send him away or take him in."

"What do you mean? The guy did you a favor."

"He certainly did. Bring him in; I

want to talk to him. If he resists, bring him anyway."

Pfluger mumbled to the front door. I went through the living room to the lanai. The rain had stopped. The stars sparkled—as if they'd been washed in the detergent suds on those display advertising cards I'd seen on the car seat.

The soft *ssshhh...ssshhh...ssshhh* of the breakers on the reef seemed to be warning me that I was playing a hunch. A hunch that seemed too pat to be fruitful.

A shuffle of feet and voices took me back through the living room.

"What's the idea?" my highway helper demanded. "I go out of my way in a storm to help you. Then you detain me. Now you have me pushed around as if I were a—"

"A murderer?" I asked, playing my hunch.

"What do you mean?"

"Look at that." I pointed to what I suspected his eyes had been carefully avoiding.

He turned slowly. Gulped air. Stepped back, "My God, what happened?"

"Murder. Not a very pretty sight with the lights on. Never is."

"Why—?"

"That's what we're here for. A burglar was disturbed as he took money from that tin box on the desk. How—" I hesitated, a few hunches had paid off in the past. Some had gotten me into a lot of trouble. The Chief didn't like hunches. "How much money do you have on you?"

"What is this?" He backed into Matt.

"Murder—like I said." I shot a glance at Pfluger. His black, beady eyes were highlighted with amusement. Then I added, knowing that I could be awfully wrong, "Search him, Matt."

"You can't. You can't suspect me!"

"I suspect everybody and everything. If I'm wrong, I'll—"

"You'll hear from my lawyer."

"I suspect I will. I suspect your lawyer will have a great deal to say to the D.A., the jury, and the judge. All right, boys, search him."

FOUR HANDS went over the guy. Two heads shook. "Nothing on him," Pfluger said, "except twelve bucks in his billfold."

"Of course, there's nothing on me," the guy said. "Look, I was coming along Diamond Head Road when the police car turned off."

"Tha's right," Pfluger said. "I remember seeing his car, a light grey Chevie." Pfluger turned his back to me. In his case, it was politeness. He was wearing a self-satisfied grin.

I wondered whose side he was on. I had been awfully wrong. Everything this guy said could be true. Seemingly, it *was* true.

My only suspect was free to walk away from the scene of the crime. As Pfluger had said, this was going to be a pip. And my late suspect was going to his lawyer, who would go to the Chief. The Chief would send for me.

A mental picture kept flashing—like a neon sign at my dull brain. I stood there for a moment looking intently at my highway helper. Finally I said, "Sorry, I made a mistake. I do, sometimes, and I'm always embarrassed."

He relaxed, visibly. "That's all right, Sergeant. We all make mistakes." Seemingly, everything this guy said was true. "Now, I'd like to run along. Big day tomorrow."

"Yeah, sure." One thing told me that something he said wasn't true. That one thing was the mental picture flashing like a neon sign. "Before you go." I pushed my hand toward him. He shook it politely. I held on, and asked, casually, "By the way, what's the name of the buyer at the Kau Kau Super Mart?"

"Kau Kau Super Mart?" The guy looked at me as if I were nuts. "Oh—you mean Random."

That did it. The guy was a bluffing liar. "No, I mean Jack Barrows; he's

a good friend of mine." I let the guy's hand go and turned to Matt. "Matt, go out in this jerk's car. See how long it would take a sneak to slip a wad of bills from his coat pocket under the seat. While you're about it, bring back the bills."

Two minutes later, Matt returned with a manila envelope. "Found this under the front seat, driver's side."

I opened the envelope and thumbed through the thick-stacked folding green. "Lot of dough for a salesman to carry under the front seat of his car. Isn't it?"

"I don't know anything about that money," the guy said. "It's a frame. I was coming down Diamond Head Road when the police car turned onto this street. This officer," he pointed to Pfluger, "admits seeing me."

"I believe the officer. I believe after leaving here, you turned down Diamond Head Road, then U-turned a block away toward Waikiki, and waited. When you saw the police car, you started up, timing your speed to pass as it turned off."

"It's a frame," the guy repeated. "I want to see my lawyer."

"I'm sure you do. Take him in, fellows. I'll wait for the lab boys, then bring in his car. I suspect he stole it."

Matt had his .38 on the guy. I went out to the lanai.

PFLUGER followed me. "Give me the fill-in. Why do you think that guy has a stolen car? Why did you suspect him?"

I didn't wonder whose side Pfluger was on. "A local soap salesman would know the name of the buyer at Kau Kau Super Mart."

"A little thing like that doesn't make him a car thief. A guy could make a mistake; he could have forgotten. And stealing a car doesn't make him a murderer."

"Sure, sure," I said patiently. "But a guy usually remembers the name of the company he works for. When I piled into the back seat of his car, I saw advertising display cards. I said: 'I see you work for Proctor and Gamble.' He said, 'What?' in a surprised voice.

"I explained, 'These display cards,' unconsciously pointing with my flashlight and automatically pressing the switch. He said, 'Oh, yeah. Sure.' Right then I suspected the car wasn't his."

"Why?" Pfluger demanded again.

"The flash beam showed the display cards were for a Palmolive-Peet detergent. When I find stolen money from the scene of a murder in his possession, I put one and two together."

"All right," Pfluger admitted, "but why would he bring a cop to the scene of *his* crime? How come we passed him coming along Diamond Head Road just as we turned onto this street?"

"If he had refused to drive me here, I'd have wondered why; I'd have investigated. Passing you was planned—just in case he needed an alibi. Bet he did something to call your attention to his car." I turned back into the living room. "It almost worked. He's a cool killer."

"Yeah," Matt said. "Look at him shake."

Pfluger turned his back to me, but I heard him mutter, "*Lucky* Ludlow."

I guess I am.

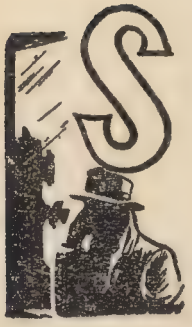
★

Another Murder Mystery by Wade B. Rubottom, "THREE-LEGGED KILLER" appears in the August issue of

FAMOUS DETECTIVE STORIES

My Friend Gets His Man

Special Feature by J. J. Mathews



SERGEANT John O'Grady, of the New York Police force, is one of my friends and critics. He reads my detective stories and articles, and expresses in no uncertain terms when the stuff is good and when is isn't. He's a mint of information when I want to be certain about a police or detective fact.

Recently he "got" his man, and the arrest concerned a crime that is rare because of the great risk involved for the criminal. The "cat" burglar and "human fly" burglar are safer in fiction than in real life.

There is a distinction between the two types. The "cat" burglar is capable of climbing up the side of a building by using his fingers as a gripping force, and his toes to stabilize his body. You need a building erected on the old brownstone idea, with just enough space between the stones so the fingers can get a grip. He doesn't need a fire escape or ladder of any type. If a fellow can do this, he can make more money in the circus, so he's a dope for wasting his good talents. The "human fly" burglar will climb up or down a building using ladder, fire escapes, or pipes; he'll even make a jump when necessary, but he hasn't the nerve and muscles of the "cat" burglar.

It was after two in the afternoon, and a resident of the Warwick Hotel at 79 W. 54th St. didn't believe what he was noticing in front of his eyes. A man was climbing the fire escape of the apartment house at 45 W. 54th Street. Then the fellow reached the roof, went over the water tank, and took a drop to the terrace of the penthouse.

Net result was that the telephone rang to notify the police, and they were soon on their way. My friend, Sergeant John O'Grady and Detective James Markley hurried to the scene to trap the burglar.

Meanwhile, the unwelcome intruder was helping himself to a good haul of furs and jewels. The police went up to the penthouse apartment and were able to enter as they had the superintendent of the building to aid them. The burglar realized he was going to be caught, so he opened a window and took a neat drop to the terrace on the 11th floor. He crawled along a ledge, turned a corner, and vanished—all this in plain sight of the cops. But they weren't worried. Every exit from the building was being guarded by cops, and there were lots of them.

Then carefully they searched apartments but didn't find their man. That could mean only one thing: he was still in the building. So around they went for a second visit. In a closet in an apartment, Sergeant John O'Grady and Detective James Markley found their man. He gave the name of Louis Basile, and he certainly went to a lot of tough climbing—all for nothing.

★

PERFECT HIDEOUT

by Cliff Campbell

They weren't identical twins, but Sam Marvin realized that he could masquerade as Frank Baxter easily enough. And since Baxter would shortly be dead . . .

THROUGH the dreary pines and sand of Georgia, with some sidehill acorn-dodger's hovel occasionally flitting by, the Bimini Bay Limited streaked effortlessly. Dusk was already softening the outlines of the landscape with a brown smudging finger and the table lamps of the de luxe dinner were on. Sam Marvin let his hooded, shrewd eyes drive over the white napery and vibrating silver to the table where his "brother" sat. Baxter, his "brother," was standing as he sorted out a palmful of change for the waiter. Then he came along the dinner aisle, rocking a little to the motion of the racing train, lumpy, florid face wreathed in the vague habitual smile that was meaningless.

"If I work it, I'll have to remember to keep wearing a sappy grin like that," Marvin told himself mentally.

Frank Baxter paused at Marvin's table, the toothpick in his mouth wagging as he spoke. "See you in the observation car about ten, eh? Got some papers I want to check over first."

When he had passed on, Marvin sucked hard on his cigaret, hand holding it trembling slightly. Murder was something he always had avoided, in a direct personal way at least. But murder would be the only safe way to play this. Once he had arrived at a decision, the trembling would go, he knew.

He went out into the Pullman vestibule, firing up another cigaret. The reflection of his own fleshy face with its guarded look stared cold-eyedly back at him from the glass of the vestibule door. He put on a loose-lipped grin and bowed. "Hello, Mr. Frank Baxter," he murmured, and the blood drummed in his head with excitement. If it could be worked, it was the perfect way out of his predicament. He would simply disappear, step into another man's shoes, and be in the clear. He would be out of those operations the Federal agents wanted to ask him questions about. And the police wouldn't be able to grab him in connection with the murder of that pusher wholesale produce dealer who'd lost his nerve when they traced those counterfeit subway tokens to him.

Of course, Marvin hadn't actually killed the man himself, but he was one of the ring who had hired those strong-arm gorillas to do the job. The D. A.'s office would be able to convict him as an accessory to it. Only they couldn't convict, much less arrest, a man who had disappeared into thin air.

If he could only work it somehow...

The presence of his "brother" on this crack Florida train was like a hunk of manna from the heavens. Marvin had mentally dubbed him "brother" when he saw him enter the observation car a few hours before. Actually, of course, he and this Baxter were not doubles. But to Marvin's trained, wary eye, used to strip aside external irrelevancies, he and Baxter were sufficiently alike to have passed as brothers.

Baxter had lowered his thick, pudgy

body into the very lounge chair beside Marvin's, beaming around as he sighed and snipped an end from an imported Havana Special. Ordered a drink, all the time, keeping that locked briefcase clutched against his tummy on his lap. Marvin hadn't had to even try to pick up a conversation with him. Baxter had opened it up with his light-hued eyes inviting friendship. He'd said something about the weather up north.

"I hear it's going to get warmer up there, very much warmer," Marvin had said curtly, thinking of his own situation, then buried his nose in a magazine. The fewer people who had occasion to mark his presence on the train, the better his chances of getting away.

But Baxter had been persistent. "Sure is nice to be rolling into the southland this time of the year all right, all right."

"Uh-huh," Marvin had said, getting ready to leave.

"Not me, though, friend. I'm not coming back, not ever. Not me! Not with this!" And he tapped the briefcase. "I'm *staying* down there. Maybe I'll go over to the Bahamas to live. Say, have a drink with me!"

Marvin had one, interest roused by the briefcase. It had been almost too easy. No probing necessary. Baxter blurted it out genially. He was retiring from business. He'd just up and quit, sold out his candy-manufacturing business for a fat figure and folded his tent.

"No sense in a man working himself to the bone till the last day of his life. Is there, now? For what?" He didn't have a family. Not a relative in the world aside from some cousin out on the Pacific Coast whom he hadn't seen in more than twenty years. No close friends—been too busy working all his life. "I've burned my bridges behind me—for keeps."

"Well, there is always your bank," Marvin had put in.

Baxter had shaken his head smugly. "Not for me. I'll open up an account when I see where I'm going to settle. But I cleaned up back in the north, lock, stock and barrel, friend. Converted everything, and I've got it right here." He hugged the briefcase affectionately. "Negotiable bonds—and a few hundred in cash in my wallet. When Frank Baxter makes a decision, he goes all the way through with it."

MARVIN bought a round of drinks just because you never repulsed a sucker, and genial, loquacious Baxter had all the earmarks of one. Marvin noticed a woman leaving the car surveying them, evidently noting the resemblance. But nobody else on the observation-club car seemed to. Marvin had studied their reflections in the opposite window. To a casual eye noting only surface details, they were quite different. Baxter wore a loose, fuzzy brown suit in contrast to the hard gray cloth that was tailored to fit Marvin like wallpaper. Baxter sat slouched, the friend of the world as he beamed vacantly from behind horn-rimmed spectacles, gray-tinged hair combed straight back from the forehead and smoothed with liberal hair oil. Marvin sat straighter, on guard, nervously raking his loose gray-tipped hair that was parted at one side.

Excusing himself a moment, Marvin had stepped into the wash-room. Quickly wetting down his hair, he combed it straight back with a pocket comb. Then he peered into the mirror, imagining himself w e a r i n g horn-rimmed spectacles, and the idea had begun to take form. It seemed almost unbelievable he had stumbled on a man with such a close resemblance—and one who was such a fool in the bargain.

When they left the club car together, Marvin discovered Baxter had a

stateroom in the Pullman just before his. A stateroom! That made it just about perfect.

Now, sucking his cigaret to a hot coal on the vestibule platform, Marvin weighed plans carefully. If he could just step into Baxter's shoes and become Frank Baxter, retired candy manufacturer for a few hours.... Sure, they'd discover later that Baxter had been murdered. But as Baxter, Marvin would be able to get a plane out of Florida and be beyond the reach of American police in a few hours.

He headed back for the observation car for a couple of drinks, pausing outside Baxter's stateroom. Through the door he could hear the sucker singing off key. "Sweet Adeline," it was. That gave him his idea. As he hurried back to his own section, he saw that evening rain was drawing a lacy pattern on the car windows. He got the bottle from his travelling bag and retraced his steps to Baxter's drawing room. The porter, no, nobody else was in sight when he applied knuckles to the door.

"Thought we might have a few little drinks in peace and comfort," Marvin led off when Baxter opened the door a crack. "The club car is jammed and they've got one of those silly swing programs coming over the air." Baxter had mentioned before that he hated this modern swing music. All he had to do was to get him ossified, kill him, then—

"Say-y, that's a fine idea. Come right—" The sudden application of the train brakes sent Baxter lurching from sight.

The next moment, the crash came....

HALFWAY down the Pullman aisle, Sam Marvin pushed himself to his knees, disentangled himself from a screaming woman who had been tossed from a berth, and tried to steady his senses. There was a pulsing lump on the back of his head, but otherwise he seemed intact. Then he remembered his mission.

The well-known pandemonium reigned complete with people shrieking and jamming drunkenly toward the exits. Marvin punched a thin man behind the ear to get him out of his way, pushed a woman back to her knees as, bloody-face uplifted, she clawed at him. There was the grind and gnash of settling steel. The car was off the rails, twisted slaunchways, with the rear end poked up so that he was walking downhill. In the corridor just before Baxter's stateroom, the colored porter lay dead with half his head crushed in. Marvin stepped over his body and saw the door of Baxter's room swinging open. The next moment he was inside and slamming it shut behind him.

Heaven seemed to be on his side, all right, all right. The events might have been rehearsed for him. Baxter lay sprawled in a corner of the seat, breathing slowly as crimson trickled from a gash in his forehead, unconscious. Marvin's heavily-haired hands found his throat and dug in.

When it was done, he stripped the shaggy brown suit from the body of the corpse. Inside of another few seconds, gloating over the riotous confusion outside, he was out of his own garments and pulling on the late Baxter's. He inspected the wallet. It was fat with greenbacks plus identification papers. Also a small key that Marvin knew was for the lock of the briefcase that had been knocked from the floor. He didn't bother inspecting the briefcase then.

He got out and down to the vestibule where the train was wind-beaten through the open door. He turned his ankle as he dropped to the gleaming tracks beside the wrecked train. Lights flashed and voices barked commands as the train crew tried to get the situation in hand.

"Are you hurt there, Mister?" a

conductor asked, appearing through a haze of escaping steam. Marvin said he was all right, moving off the rails to the wide-eyed people standing beyond the roadbed. The trick was to get quit of the scene as soon as possible. Somebody was saying the train had crashed into the rear of a freight.

And then Marvin saw a locomotive's headlight leaping out of the haze, a northbound flyer coming up the adjoining track. He started to run up the slippery clay bank. There was a crash like the roof of the heavens collapsing as the flyer plowed into the wreckage thrown over its rails. Marvin looked over his shoulder. The car he had just quitted, where Baxter's stateroom was, bucked up in the middle, then was folded like a closing accordion. Anything human inside that car, if they ever got it out, would be just so much jelly, beyond identification for all time. In a flash, Marvin realized he could be Frank Baxter for the rest of his life.

Then a flying piece of hot steel hit him alongside the jaw. Even as he lay in the wet grass with half his head numb, Marvin realized he was still gripping the precious briefcase.

SOMEBODY said, "Now, you're going to be all right, Baxter." He pried open his eyes again to see that he was in the emergency ward of a hospital. He heard the interne assuring him that he was all right save for some contusions and burns of the face. Then the needle nicked his arm....

When he opened his eyes again, bright morning sunlight was pouring into the white antiseptic-looking hospital room. He put a hand to his face and felt of the bandages that swathed it. That was all right with him. Less danger than ever of his identity being questioned if it was known that Frank Baxter's countenance had been damaged in a train accident. Then he became aware of the other people in the room.

"Yes, that's Frank, all right. I haven't seen him in years. When I used to visit him at the sanitarium, it seemed to make him violent," the big horse-faced brassy-haired woman was saying. "But I'd know my own husband!" She glared around as if defying denial.

Marvin felt himself going taut. There was a husky police officer nodding at Mrs. Baxter, and a second man, husky too. He winked at Marvin.

"Hello, Frank! Guess you're ready to come back to the asylum, huh? We take care of you good back there. But Dr. Loring is going to be real angry about your running off like that, Frank. He's going to be real disappointed. You behave yourself for eight years, then go and escape like that. Was that nice, Frank?"

Marvin felt as if he were strangling to death as the truth began to sink in. It was too incredible. His eyes seemed to be poking right out of his head. "J-just a—a minute. Just a—look, I'm not Frank Baxter. I'm—"

"Who are you then, Mister?"

Marvin sucked air. "I—I'm—" He felt as if he were actually going crazy, like Baxter, then. "Look, you gotta give me those bonds in my briefcase," he croaked desperately.

"Bonds?" The police officer chuckled. "Why, Mr. Baxter, back at the nut-house, they'll give you more pretty travel folders than you ever had in that briefcase! Sure. Why—" He started forward as Marvin wrenched his body half erect in the bed.

But the attendant from the asylum threw up an arm. "It's all right. Frank never really goes violent on us any more.... We just give him some dough from the kitchen so he can make pretty pieces of candy, and he's all right...."

★

It started like the Hollywood version of a case — extra lush blonde with problem, but perfectly willing to discuss same under the most relaxing conditions . . . then somehow a grade B horror script, international villains variety, got mixed up with the works. Only, I was the one who was getting the works, and those birds who were dishing them out to me really meant it!

BAIT THE HOOK WITH A BLONDE

by William F. Schwartz

I GULPED down the dregs of my eighth glass of pilsener and decided the lady—whoever she was—was no lady.

I turned back the sleeve of my one hundred buck blue gabardine suit and cast my sky-blue orbs at the one hundred and twenty-five buck Bulova that was strapped to my hairy left wrist. The timepiece informed me, with a jeer, that it was 11:56 p.m. And the lady who was no lady had assured me, via the telephone, that she would rendezvous with me here at Mike's at exactly a quarter after eleven.

Suddenly I realized how bored I was at the antics of Gorgeous Gus and Chief Spread Eagle who, at the moment, were making obscene gestures at each other on the TV set at the other end of the bar. I decided to call it a night.

I hauled out my twenty-five buck brown leather wallet and took inventory of the green material that nestled therein. There were exactly four pieces of negotiable paper inside—and all bore the be-wigged image of the Father of Our Country; it appeared as though I were doomed to dine on hamburgers on the morrow.

That was why this lady who was no lady was so important to me. I have a build that calls for sizzling steaks; I am six one and weigh one ninety-five stripped. Besides, this was Tuesday and the rent for my office, one C-note even for the month, was due on Friday. And this lady was supposed to be a client.

That afternoon when I was in my office trying to decide which of my meagre possessions were available for hocking, the telephone jarred me from my unhappy reverie. There was a lady on the other end of the wire and she sounded disturbed and agitated.

After I admitted I was Clay Fenton, the private investigator, she disclosed she had some employment for me. When I mentioned my fee was fifty bucks a day plus expenses, she still wasn't discouraged. "I can't come over to your office," she said. "Can you meet me somewhere else?"

I suggested Mike's and gave her the address. "I'll be there at eleven fifteen," she said.

"Can you tell me what this is all about?" I wanted to know.

"I'll tell you then," she said. Then she asked, "Do you carry a gun?"

"I have a license."

"Then bring the gun; you may need it." Then she hung up without even telling me her name.

SO HERE I was, with my .38 in my shoulder holster, with four miserable bucks in my wallet—and no client!

I was sliding off the chrome and blue leather stool and reaching for my thirty-five buck hat when Maisie, one of big Mike's waitresses, came swishing up. "There's a dame looking for you," Maisie said, and jerked a thumb over her shoulder.

I tried to conceal my eagerness. If this was my client, the price of those eight beers was going to be the first item on my swindle sheet.

I wondered, vaguely, what she'd look like. But I was totally unprepared for the divine creature who came prancing up to me. She was a goddess, a blonde valkyrie in a blue boucle suit who had wandered down from Valhalla. Suddenly, all other women in the smoke-fogged bistro were dwarfed, ugly.

She wasn't quite as tall as I am, but she was close to it. Her somewhat ample figure was more meaty than the ideal Hollywood standards. "You are Clay Fenton, the detective?" she asked in a musical voice that bore a trace of an accent.

"I am," I confessed, as soon as I regained my voice.

"I am sorry I am late," she said; "will you forgive me?"

"Yeh," I said, dazedly. I would have forgiven her anything.

I glanced around the place. There wasn't a table, a booth available anywhere. But eyes—both male and female—stared at us through the smoky haze with undisguised emotions. She was a magnet for all eyes. The men's eyes were awed with admiration; the women's eyes clawed with jealousy.

"Let us go somewhere else," she suggested.

"Where?" I asked, still stupidly.

"Somewhere where we can have some—some privacy."

"Lead on!" I urged. Privacy, with her, was something I yearned for in huge doses.

But then I remembered my four miserable bucks. She was my client. She should foot all bills. But—

"Wait a minute," I told her. Then I lured big Mike back into the men's room and borrowed a hundred pieces of spinach from him.

"Still a sucker for a blonde," he sneered, goodnaturedly.

"Yeh," I admitted.

A short while ago, I wanted a client who could pay my rent. Now— Something was starting to tell me that, maybe, I wouldn't be paid off for my services in coin of the realm. No wonder I'm always broke.

We hailed a taxi. The cabbie positively drooled when he reached back and opened the door to let us in. She gave him an address that I didn't even catch because I wasn't even listening. I was all eyes, positively no ears at all.

She leaned back in the seat, and discarding all business ethics, I started making passes right away. She didn't resist. Her lips were full and moist and torrid. I began to think of where I might be able to borrow another hundred bucks.

I skipped through Elysian fields until the cabbie's grating voice smashed me down to Earth with a laconic, "We're here, Mac."

I was still in a daze as we paraded under an awning, then took a self-service elevator up about ten floors. I took the key from her lily-white hand and opened the door of the apartment.

"Mix yourself a drink," she instructed. "I want to change into something more comfortable." Then she disappeared into an adjoining room.

THERE WAS a mahogany cabinet that held an array of headache-makers, including some clear white bottles whose ornate labels proclaimed that the dynamite inside was vodka. I was starting to pour some bourbon into a tumbler when some inner voice began to jabber at me that this wasn't strictly the McCoy. This was something like a GI's dream. I began to suspect that, shortly, would come the rude awakening.

So I wasn't exactly off guard when the two bruisers, each about the size of an overgrown Gorgeous Gus, waddled into the room. But a helluva lot of good it did me. My both hands were occupied. My right held a bottle; my left, a tumbler. And each of these characters had a sizable hunk of artillery in his right fist.

The goddess was right behind them. I was surprised she didn't have a gun, too.

"Hands up!" she ordered. She sounded like a character in some horse opera, only there was no drawl. Then I recognized the accent. And it wasn't the voice that had talked to me over the phone.

I lifted my hands. They still had the bourbon in them. I was trying to think fast. I used to play baseball. Maybe. It was a long chance. But—

"Drop those," she commanded. "And no funny business."

I hesitated a moment. One of the pair started to mutter. I didn't comprehend the words, but blasphemy is easy to detect in any language. I dropped "those", right on the lush green wall-to-wall carpet. There was no tinkling glass; the rug was too thick for that. Seconds later, she slipped behind me. While those two pieces of artillery were levelled at my guts, she relieved me of my .38 automatic.

"I don't get it," I said to nobody in particular.

"Where is she?" the woman I used to think was a goddess demanded.

"Where's who?" I asked.

She slapped me, hard, across the mouth. I said she was a big woman; she had a wallop like Joe Louis. I staggered and tasted the saltiness of blood inside my mouth. "Do not lie!" she commanded. "Or we will beat it out of you!"

"So you're looking for *her?*" I asked. It was a stupid question because I didn't know who "her" was. But I didn't need a high IQ to figure out they were after the dame who had called me that afternoon. Then before the erstwhile goddess could smash me in the teeth again, I blurted out, "What's in it—*for me?* I work for money, you know."

She smiled. There was witchery in

her smile, but I didn't buy it. "I work for money," I repeated.

The smile vanished. She barked something—I guess it was some comments on my ancestry.

"These guys speak English?" I asked, stalling for time.

She didn't bother to answer. But one of her playmates did. "I speak the language better than you," he boasted. Maybe he did; the only accent he had sounded British. "I speak it better than you with your heathenish American dialect. You toads speak only one language; the language of money. 'What's in it for me?' he asks. Perhaps a grave. We have methods of loosening the tongue, and we do not need to bribe, either."

"Yeh," I admitted. "I heard about those methods."

"Then you better talk," he suggested, casually.

"Okay," I said. "I'll talk, then maybe I'll get a jello box-top." But I wondered what I would talk about. I was still in the dark, as they say. I still didn't even know who the dame was who had phoned me.

"I got a telephone call this afternoon," I began, "from her; I was supposed to meet her tonight." Then I stopped. I didn't like the self-satisfied smirks on their faces.

"Go to Hell!" I urged them.

The two didn't shoot, because I swung Miss Moscow 1954, in front of me. I almost tore her arm from her shoulder, but I got my gun; I pulled the trigger twice and the two monsters crumpled to the floor—each with a .38 slug in his guts. Then I smashed the barrel right into that mass of flaxen hair. Not enough to kill her, just enough to keep her quiet. Then I rushed forward and kicked the guns away from the pair.

"I ought to let you die," I told the comrade with the British accent, "but I won't. Maybe the FBI might want to ask a few questions." I went to the phone, began to dial my friend Lieutenant Arch McCue, at Police Headquarters. Then I remembered I didn't even know where I was at.

"What's the address here?" I demanded of the one with the British accent.

His "Go to Hell!" was even more vehement than mine.

"Uncle Georgi will love you for this," I told him. Then, as the two watched me with pain-filled eyes, I walked over to the liquor cabinet and selected a bottle with care. I hoisted it aloft so they could see the water-colored fluid. "Like a little drink of this before you go to meet Stalin?" I asked. "A toast from a dying enemy and so forth?"

ANIMAL-LIKE gratitude leaped into their eyes. I filled a tumbler to the brim. Then I strode across the carpet. Their jaws sagged and they blasphemed again as I threw the vodka straight into the face of the erstwhile goddess.

The liquor accomplished its purpose. It brought her around; her eyes blinked open. Then she bolted upright when she saw what the score was and who was ahead. "The address, Olga?" I asked; "where are we?"

Still in a daze, she blurted it out before the others could scream at her to keep quiet. I held the gun on her and dialed Police Headquarters. Quite a trick, I'll admit; try it sometime.

I explained the situation to McCue in terse sentences; I told him to contact the FBI and to bring a sawbones. Then I tied up the two with a piece of rope I found in the other room on a bed. A chunk of hemp, I guess, that they intended to truss me up with. Then I left them there. I didn't care too much whether they kicked the Soviet equivalent of the bucket or not.

Olga didn't want to come along. That is, until I smacked her, hard, with the butt of the gun across her well-rounded buttocks a couple of times. "You beast!" she called me in

English; I don't know what she called me in Russian.

We went outside and I flagged a cab. I didn't have the remotest idea where I would take her. There was only one place, my office.

"The lady's drunk," I told the night watchman. "Smell the grog on her."

He smelled.

Appreciation was in the watchman's bleary eyes as he drank in the contours of Olga's lush figure. I guess he never saw the goose egg on the back of her flaxen hair.

"Lucky lad!" he congratulated. "But what about the other one?"

"The other one!"

He winked. "Yeh. The other one. I let her in about an hour ago. Sure wished I was a mite younger; might help yuh out myself." Then he cackled with laughter and limped down the corridor.

The other one! I thought. *Who the hell could that be? Unless—*

I had Olga in front of me and my .38 in my hand when I swung open the door of my office.

OLGA CURSED and I heard a squeal of terror. There was a dame in my office, all right, and she was bug-eyed with fright. She was a couple of years over thirty, I guessed, a pale-faced creature who wore thick-lensed glasses. She had a figure like a bottle of ketchup and looked like somebody who liked to pose as a thinker. She had straggly, mouse-colored hair and no makeup whatsoever. Her woolen suit probably cost plenty but it was a mass of wrinkles. She was unkempt; there were runs in her stockings.

"Who're you?" I asked.

She didn't answer. Her teeth chattered together in fright.

"Traitor!" Olga rasped at her.

"You're the dame who called me this afternoon?" I demanded. "I'm Clay Fenton."

She nodded, but she was still scared silly.

"Sit down, Olga!" I gestured with my gun until that luscious figure dropped into a chair. Then I wheeled on the other one. "Now tell me what this is all about."

She shook her head. "Not with *her* here!" She pointed toward Olga.

"I forbid you to talk!" Olga ordered the other dame. "You're one of us! You know what will happen if you talk!"

I brought my fist close to Olga's mouth. "Another peep out of you and I ram your teeth down your throat!"

OLGA WAS cowed a little, but still the other babe wouldn't sing. So I locked Olga in my inner office, and as the Romans say, I lent my ears—my cauliflowered ears—to the other dame.

Between sobs, she told me her name was Jean Foster and that her father was the well-known manufacturer of a well-known brand of toothpaste. She was a member of a tribe that is just crawling with moola. She had gotten mixed up with some pinkos in college, and wound up by signing a party card. Her job was to collect funds. This, she had done with zeal all the time we were supplying lend-lease to the boys in the Kremlin; in the process, she'd learned a lot of other things; gone pretty high in the ranks. When the war broke out in Korea, she decided to break, but they held threats over her head, told her they'd report her past activities to the FBI.

"I was afraid to go to the police," she said. "That's why I contacted you. Somehow—I don't know how—they discovered I phoned you. I saw her waiting outside that—that place where you told me to meet you. So I came here."

"This is hardly a job for me," I told her; "this is one for the FBI."

"But—but—" she began.

"Stow it," I told her. "You were a sucker for them, just like a lot of others. Now it's your turn to show them what suckers they were—by spilling

your guts to the FBI. Come on, we'll get Olga; then we're on our way."

But we weren't on our way. I blasphemed aloud, in good old United States, when I went into the other room. I was a sucker, too. Olga was gone. She had flown the coop. The door was still locked. But, somehow, the erstwhile goddess had managed to squeeze through the transom. It must have been tough, she was so big and buxom. But she managed. When somebody's fighting for life, a lot of things can be managed. Believe me, I know.

Olga's escape added to Jean's panic. "They'll get me!" she moaned. "I was too valuable to them; they'll get me! I know they will!"

"If they do," I told her, bluntly, "it's your own fault. Your only hope is to lead me to where they hole out. Maybe we might even beat Olga there."

She still didn't want to cooperate.

"Look," I warned her, "tell me where they hole up or I'll turn you over to them. You're in this deep; you got me in, too. Spill your guts or I'll tie you up and phone them that you're here."

I started toward the phone. Of course, I had no idea where to call, but she was too panic-stricken to think of that. "I'll—I'll take you!" she managed to gasp.

She gave me the address and I called Police Headquarters. Lieutenant Arch McCue wasn't back yet. But I gave Sergeant Sam Morris enough to work on. He promised to get in touch with McCue right away.

I still had a couple of slugs in my .38. And I still had their guns. They looked like German Lugers; maybe they were. But, then again, maybe they were imitations of the German weapons that had been manufactured by some German slaves in some factory behind the Iron Curtain.

The safest course would have been to wait for McCue and his boys, but I didn't like to wait. Waiting would give them time to burn their stuff and head for the boats. Of course, I couldn't take this Foster babe with me right up to their headquarters. She was on the off-list, and maybe by this time, Olga had passed the word along that Jean had turned canary. I left her down the street where she could flag down the coppers and direct them to the hide-out.

ARMED with the three pieces of artillery and the password that Jean had told me, I sauntered down to the dingy little candy store in the poverty-stricken tenement district.

There were two big bruisers lounging in the doorway, and when I spotted them, I nearly did an about-face; their hands were deep in the pockets of their trench coats as I strolled up to them.

They stared daggers at me; I gave the password, and one of them said something at me in Russian. I shrugged my shoulders. I wanted to crack wise and mutter I was strictly homegrown, but I didn't. I merely said, "I'm an American; I understand no Russian."

"We don't know you!" No. 1 said.

That didn't stop me. In that racket, being unknown, even to Party members, is considered an asset. "I've been underground," I said. I figured that would impress them. Then I added in a lower tone, "I'm a courier from Pittsburgh."

They didn't seem to be impressed; their broad faces were strictly deadpan; their eyes still glittered with suspicion. I decided to act tough. I heard they like their buckos that way. "I have my credentials here!" I barked at them and tapped my coat pocket. "I'll show them—inside! If you don't let me in—*immediately!*—I'll report you. *Both of you!*" Meanwhile, I wondered who the hell there was to report them to—except the FBI.

I watched them while No. 1, the larger one, pulled a flashlight from his left pocket and disappeared into the

gloomy interior. I began to wish I could do a disappearing act myself—right down the street; but it was too late now. No. 2 didn't say a word. He just kept glaring at me. His right hand was still deep in the pocket of his trench coat. I probably had more artillery on me than he did. But he had the drop on me. My hands were outside my pockets. I had walked up to them that way, figuring it would arouse less suspicion; I was sorry now.

I felt hungry for a cigaret, but made no effort to extract one from my coat pocket. I was afraid this character might mistake my intentions. I just waited until I saw the glare of the flashlight in the store and watched No. 1 emerge.

"This way," he barked and moved aside.

"After you, my dear Gaston," I felt like saying. But I didn't. I knew I was a sucker for walking in first. But what could I do? The play was all in their hands.

I took a deep breath and stepped inside. The place was pitch black except for the beam from the flashlight he held pointed in front of my feet. I started to grope along. Then—

Wham!

I was drowning in a deep pool. No. It was the ocean, because a wave slapped me in the face. But the water didn't taste salty. Its flavor was peculiar. Why, it was alcohol. Whiskey. Another wave slapped me. More whiskey.

But it wasn't whiskey. It was vodka. Olga stood in front of me with the nearly empty bottle. "A waste of good vodka!" she said. "But I suppose it's another good old American custom to awaken one with vodka."

"Where is she?" Olga demanded.

"That's the second time you asked me that tonight," I told her. Then I tried, hard, not to wince when she smashed me square in the mouth with her open hand. I tasted blood again and all around me the others chuckled. There must have been about ten of them; all males but Olga. I couldn't see very well. My head was still dizzy and a couple of flashlights were pointed into my face, blinding me.

"Where is she?" Olga insisted.

I said nothing. I licked my bloody lips and said nothing. But, this time, I knew the answer. That Foster babe, by now, should be leading McCue and his men here. I hoped they would keep a fast schedule.

THEN somebody began to jabber in Russky. Olga answered him. She seemed to be agreeing, but reluctantly. "If I had my way," she told me in English, "I would beat an answer out of you, but we have not the time. Anyway, you shall die. In the flames, you shall die. This place is useless to us now. We shall burn it with the papers we cannot carry away."

There was more jabbering among the others, then I saw a light flicker. One of them had a burning pocket lighter in his hand. Olga crashed her fist into my face once more and I nearly passed out. Then they clattered out of the room. Only the fire-bug stayed behind.

I watched, fascinated, as he applied petrol and lighter to a pile of crumpled papers. There was a *swoosh* of sound as fire raced along the deserted documents. The man started to ignite another pile, then he changed his mind.

"Toad!" he shouted at me and hurried from the room. He was taking no chance of being gobbled up in the fire himself.

Tongues of flame were licking at the walls. Fire began to creep up the greasy wall-paper. In minutes, the room would be a raging inferno, and I was trapped; helpless. I tried to edge away from the creeping flames, but I was pinioned to the chair.

I found myself wanting to scream, but I had to think! Think!

The crackling flames deadened the sound, but I distinctively heard the banshee wail of a police siren. Help

was near, but the flames were closer; I had no escape.

The staccato roar of gunfire echoed in my ears. Automatics. Police positives. The *rat-tat-tat* of a Tommy gun. They were shooting it out—right outside—right below the window.

The window! The window was close. I watched the reflection of the flame as it danced on the dusty, cracked panes of the window. The window was old-fashioned, built right at floor level.

I STEELED myself, rocked back and forth on the chair. Then I hurled myself backward, chair and all, straight at the window.

Glass smashed into me; splinters of it tore at my head, my face. I went tumbling backward into space. Then I was falling—down. The pavement raced up to meet me. I had a glimpse of terror-stricken faces, of people scattering wildly to avoid my falling body. Then I crashed right into the center of the franctic mass of humanity.

I found myself staring up into McCue's grinning face. There were others in the room, too, only they wore white. I was back again in my favorite room at Mercy Hosptal. Maybe, I thought, dully, I should rent the place by the year. It was only about six months since my last visit here.

"Ringling Brothers' Circus is looking for guys like you," McCue jibed. "A high dive out of a burning building—and tied to a chair, too!"

I experimented with my jaw; it wasn't broken. "Ah, nuts!" I managed to tell him.

My jaw wasn't broken, I said; but my left leg was. It was propped up right in front of my face. It looked monstrous with all that plaster of paris. I couldn't lift my left arm. More plaster of paris. Another fracture. My right arm was still in working order, so I felt the bandages on my head.

McCue was still giving out with the corn. "I never knew you were an acrobat," he said. "Not until you came sailing out of the window and landed right smack into the middle of the pile; they were still gun-happy until then, but your little trick took the starch out of them."

"Nuts!" I repeated.

"We got 'em all," he went on. "The quick, the dead and the ones you crippled with that high dive."

"Olga, too?" I asked.

"Yeh. Olga, too, if you mean that female critter—only that wasn't her name; her name was Anya. Anya Checkov. At least, that's what the FBI boys told me. She slipped off a boat up in Boston about eighteen months ago. But, anyway, no matter what her name was, she probably saved your life."

"How?" I wanted to know.

"Why, my lad," he began, "I thought you picked your target. Anya's buxom body helped cushion your fall...it broke her neck. She was among the casualties."

"There were others, too?" I asked. "On our side, maybe?"

"Only one fatal on our side," he said. "Jean Foster. We warned her to stay back, but she trailed along; a stray bullet cut her down. She died instantly."

So here I was. With no dough except what I had borrowed from big Mike and four miserable ones; with no client; but with a flock of busted bones. Would I even live?

But then my nurse wandered into my line of vision. And what a vision! She was blonde and buxom and delectable. I knew I wasn't going to throw a seven; a dying man doesn't get the ideas that began to creep into my brain.

"Will you lend me fifty bucks?" I asked McCue. "I'll pay you back when I get my next client."

★

SPOTLIGHT ON CRIME

(*continued from page 6*)

try with his wife—a Miss Rodh—and settling in the western part of the State of New York. He had three children, of whom George was born in this country. Leaving New York State, Leslie's father went to Cincinnati and established a brewery. There young George was educated, first in the local schools and then in the university, whence he was graduated with high honors. His mother died in the interim and his father married again. The second wife ill-treated her stepchildren.

George left home, came East and fell into bad company. He had been brought up in luxury, was a spendthrift, and the tastes he had acquired for ease and good living led him to spend money rapidly. Possessing great mechanical genius, and prompted by the acquaintances he had made among the criminal classes, he speedily drifted into their ranks. His forte was architecture and the use of house-breaking tools. From his father he inherited the business tact, which never deserted him; he was above committing depredations himself. In the course of a criminal career extending over a period of twenty years, he was never known to be connected with what is termed a "clothes-line affair." He started in at the top of the ladder; and supposing he had been interested in a thousand burglaries, those in which he was indirectly concerned would number more than three-fourths of them.

During the latter years of his life he was sought for by active criminals, as a "putter-up," or planner of robberies, and, second, as a disposer of the plunder. He was such an expert mechanic, and so able a negotiator, that his fame spread wherever first-class criminals associated. Supposing him, for instance, to be in Cincinnati. A telegram might summon him to Boston, Philadelphia, New York, or any other large city, simply to "look over" the scheme for a burglary which might be carried out by others. Or, it might be he was wanted to dispose of what had been obtained by a previous robbery.

His early training left an impression on him When his association with criminals is spoken of, it does not mean that he was constantly with the men who were enriched by his ability to plan raids upon property, or that they were his only companions. He was always well-dressed, had a taste for the fine arts, was somewhat of a bibliomaniac, loved the stage not simply for the amusement it afforded him, but to gratify his critical disposition; and many men, prominent in respectable society, knew him more or less intimately as a man about town, seen at theatres, opening of Academy exhibitions, poring over stands in bookstores, and as a frequenter of all libraries to which access could be had. His exterior and bearing were those of a dillettante and business man.

He was somewhat short of stature, but robust, with a clean-cut, handsome face. Patronizing only the best and most fashionable tailors and haberdashers he always appeared to advantage. Certainly in this city he lived a double life. Many men yet live who remember him as an enigma. They had met him under circumstances which precluded any doubt of his respectability. Of course, in his role as a first-class criminal, he did not neglect to associate and ingratiate himself with such of the detective fraternity as might injure or help him.

[*Turn To Page* 84]

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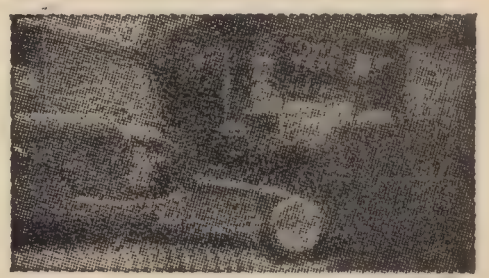

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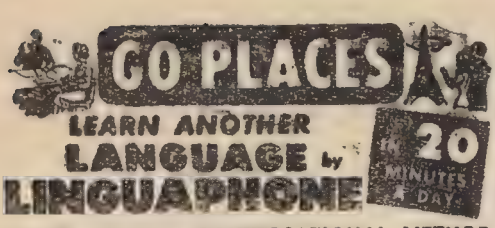

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THERE IS only one instance on record of his having fallen into serious trouble with the police. This was in 1870, at Norristown, a village near Philadelphia. A plot had been laid to rob a jewelry store. It was one of those occasions when Leslie found it necessary to take an active part in the crime. His companion was Gilbert Yost, also known as Charles Howard, alias Heard, alias Wilbert. By the veriest mischance—probably due to Yost—they were discovered just as they were about to enter the store, and both were captured. Leslie was bailed by a woman who came post-haste from Chicogo; it is hardly necessary to say that the bail was estreated. Yost was convicted, and served a term of two years in Montgomery Prison.

It happened that shortly before this, Leslie found it convenient to make the City of Philadelphia his headquarters. He moved there in a certain class of society, just as he had done in New York. Of course, the first-class detective talent in that city knew just as well who he was as they did the superintendent of police. But this hidden knowledge was profitable, and his identity was kept a profound secret in expectation of prospective lucrative favors. Thus he became an inmate of No. 508 Locust Street, a boarding-house kept by Mrs. Mary E. Coath, the grass-widow of an hotel-keeper

[*Turn To Page* 86]

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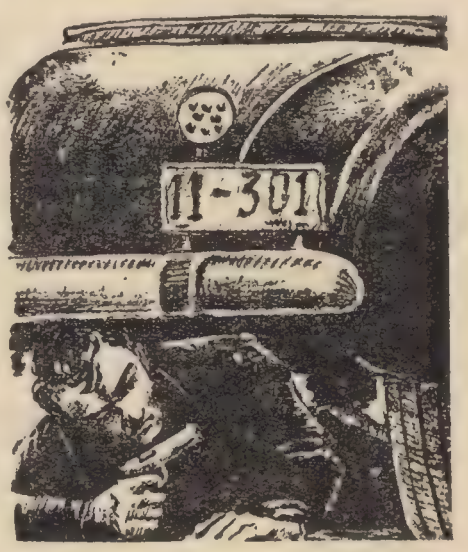
whose domestic affairs were so involved that he found it expedient to make a bee-line for the Western mining regions. In this boarding-house, Leslie became acquainted with his landlady's daughter, Mary Henrietta Coath, a very fascinating, blue-eyed girl of fourteen years, who had been tenderly brought up and well educated. She fell in love with the strange, handsome, well-dressed courteous boarder.

His courtship was sincere, and she married him when she was fifteen years old, believing him at that time to be an Internal Revenue detective. Even while paying attentions to the girl, however, he kept up his criminal connections, and aided and advised in several large burglaries. The honeymoon was hardly over when the scheme of a gang of first-class burglars to rob the South Kensington National Bank was carried out.



The burglars began operations by sending one of their number to the bank in question and informing the cashier that a plot had been set on foot to rob the bank that very night; it would be best for them to allow none but officers in uniform to enter the premises after banking hours. This

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messenger professed to have been sent from police headquarters. The watchmen were put on the qui-vive, and so when, late on the evening of February 2, 1871, men in the police uniform knocked at the door of the bank and imparted the information that they had been sent as an additional protection, they were immediately admitted.

As soon as the door was closed one of the men drew from his pocket a bottle of whiskey, and offered the watchmen a drink. The latter were—well, they were watchmen. One of them found tumblers, and the other drew a little ice-water from the cooler. Before these pleasing preliminaries were completed, however, one of the pretended policemen invited watchman No. 1 outside for the purpose of identifying some suspicious persons who were nearby. The other watchman, "Old Murphy," remained inside, and was considerably startled by an unlooked-for-occurrence. Before he had an opportunity of realizing what was going

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on, he was bound and gagged by the very man who had been sent out to the assistance of the bank. The other watchman with the alleged policeman knocked, was admitted and likewise bound and gagged. They were completely powerless. In a few moments sufficient safe-breaking tools were brought into the bank by the seeing policemen to open its vault. Short work was made of all obstacles between the burglars and the round $100,000 in cash which the safe contained.

IT IS TO be doubted if Leslie did more than survey the building, locate the safe, estimate the force necessary to get at the plunder, and stand watch for the actual perpetrators of the robbery, who were James McCoy, "Tom" McCormick, "Jim" Casey, "Johnny" Dobbs, "Jim" Brady, Harry Glenn, "Ike" Marsh and "Jimmie" Hope, the last named, Leslie's sole peer, now languishing in jail at San Francisco.

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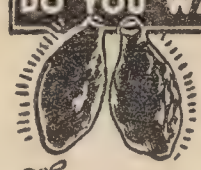

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It is said that Joshua Taggart, who at this time controlled the "optional intelligence" of the Philadelphia detective force, was a friend of Leslie's. No arrests were made. When it became necessary to make public the facts of the robbery, it was jokingly said that the car horses even in Philadelphia had been talking about it twenty-four hours after its commission.

Leslie did not stop at the Kensington Bank robbery. He took a part in April, 1872, in the robbery of the Lycoming Insurance Company, at Muncy, Pennsylvania. The "gang" got away from there with only $30,000, but they improved upon that when, five months afterwards, they made a raid on the Third National Bank of Baltimore and secured $140,000. Two months later they levied on the Saratoga County Bank, of Waterford, N. Y., to the extent of $300,000. These depredations were followed by the robbery of John Breennan's jewelry store, No. 13 South Eighth Street, Philadelphia, $30,000; the Wellsbro' Bank, Pennsylvania, $90,000; and the Milford (New Hampshire) Bank of $100,000. There is not the slightest doubt that Leslie participated either in the commission or the division of the plunder of each of these crimes.

It was not until late in 1874 that Leslie's wife knew the real character of the man to whom she was married. When the revelation came, her infatuation for him was such that she was willing to share his fortunes as a confessed villain. 'Tis said that the discovery was made mainly through a dispute with the Philadelphia detective talent. Taggart thought that his share of Leslie's good fortune was not equal to his appetite for hush money. A scheme was accordingly arranged to entrap Leslie. He was arrested; he promised to be more generous; a spoke was put in the wheels of justice and he was given his liberty, to find that his wife was acquainted with his past and

[*Turn Page*]

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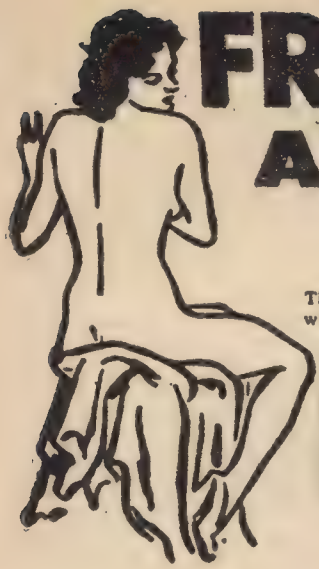
prospective career. After the discovery husband and wife went to Brooklyn, N. Y., and resided there in several localities: at the Clinton House in Fulton Street. No. 478 Fulton Street, and No. 861 Greene Avenue, where the Manhattan Bank robbery was planned. Then they went to Harrison Street, Stapleton, Staten Island.

Up to this time, despite the wife's knowledge of her husband's business, her relations with him had been happy. Leslie had ample means at all times, gratified his wife's every wish, was as careful as ever of living before the world as an honest man, and as prudent in conducting his criminal schemes. While at Stapleton, however, Mrs. Leslie noticed that her husband had changed; he often appeared preoccupied, was harsh to her, not liberal as heretofore, and often absented himself from home for periods varying from a few days to several weeks.

It is now known that at first his attentions were devoted to "Babe" Irving, sister of the Johnny Irving who was killed by "John, the Mick," in "Shang" Draper's saloon on Sixth Avenue. In one instance he spent several weeks with "Babe" and a convival party in the Catskills, neglecting his wife. Leslie was also enamoured of the wife, or mistress, of "Shang" Draper, and it is probable that the money he received from the syndicate was not all spent at home. These liaisons completely changed his mode of life. His proverbial sagacity and prudence deserted him.

WHEN, IN February, 1878, it was planned to rob the Dexter Savings Bank, at Dexter, Maine, Leslie did what is known as the "outside" work. In committing the robbery, which netted a very small amount of money, the cashier, James W. Barron, had to be gagged. The scheme was consummated on the 22d of February, 1878. The burglars, sneaking in through the open door, surprised Bar-

[*Turn To Page* 94]



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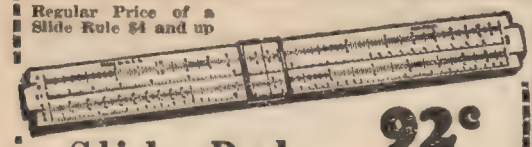

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ron, who was poring over his accounts late at night. The old cashier made a determined resistance in defending the property of the bank and his own person; in silencing him the burglars dealt with him so roughly that he was found dead when the robbery was discovered.

Leslie was completely unnerved by this murder, and hurried to his wife, who was then in Baltimore. He told her he was tired of the life he was leading, and determined to end it. He said he had means and proposed to go somewhere and do a legitimate business; open a cigar store in some great city, and silence those who knew of his past career. He left his wife with the understanding that he was going to Albany, N. Y. This was in April, 1878.

He returned three weeks later, utterly prostrated and apparently in terror. He said he had made a mistake, and spoke of assasination, but very vaguely. All Mrs. Leslie inferred was, that in some way or other he had got into ill-repute with his associates in crime. When the facts of the Dexter Bank robbery came out she said she had no doubt that Leslie, unnerved by the murder, had dropped a hint, of which some detective in his confidence had made capital.

She saw him alive for the last time on the 10th of May. He then gave her a small sum of money, and told her he had secreted another sum in the house, which might prove very useful to her. There is no doubt that when Leslie left his wife—they were then in Philadelphia—he went directly to Brooklyn, to the house No. 101 Lynch Street, where lived "Shang" Draper, Jemmy Mooney and Gilbert Yost. Hard by, at No. 152 Patchen Avenue, lived "Billy" Porter and "Johnny" Irving. There is little less doubt that two weeks afterwards Leslie was murdered there by his associates, and his body carried to Tramps' Rock, Yonkers, where it was found as already related.

The police having no special interest

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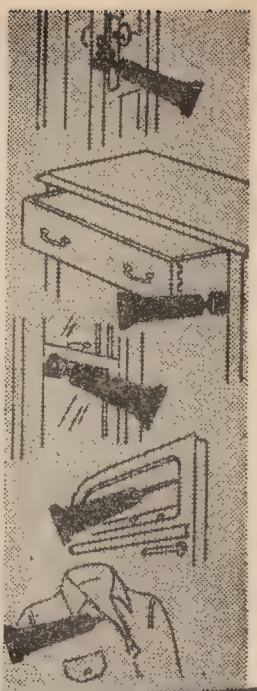

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in shielding those who were implicated in the crime, named "Shang" Draper, "Billy" Porter, "Johnny" Dobbs, "Johnny" Irving, and "Sam" Perris, alias "Worchester Sam," as being concerned in it. The police fortified their theory by saying there had been a quarrel over the division of spoils, that Draper was jealous of Leslie, that Irving was opposed to him on account of his intimacy with "Babe," and that Leslie had become "leaky" in regard to professional secrets.

This theory of the police was, in a certain sense, substantiated. In the first place, when the body was found at Tramps' Rock there was straw near it, and also along the road leading to the rock. It was remembered by a country man that a wagon (of which an accurate description was obtained), drawn by a sorrel horse, was seen in the neighborhood about Decoration Day, at which time the body must have been placed where it was found. One peculiarity about this wagon was that wisps of straw were sticking out from it, and there was something covered with straw on the floor of the vehicle. This description traced the wagon to the Astoria Ferry, over it, and thence towards Williamsburg.

"Ed" Goodie, a burglar associated with the Mandelbaum-Leslie clique, possessed such a horse, and a wagon similar to the one described had been used by him, both in New York and Brooklyn, in removing stolen goods and the furniture of members of the gang. Moreover, when, shortly afterwards, a burglary in Brooklyn was traced to the inmates of the Patchen Avenue house, and thence to Lynch Street, old "Marm" Mandelbaum went to the latter place and carefully superintended the taking away of a vast amount of property, which included a valise! I was particularly anxious to procure this, and while public excitement was at its height I sent out the following "general alarm":

[*Turn Page*]

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Corroborative testimony as to the complicity of the men named in the murder was obtained by Detective Wiggin, of Boston, while hunting up clues to the killing of cashier Barron, at Dexter. His researches led him to Yonkers, where he obtained information that at the time the body must have been placed at Tramps' Rock, "Johnny" Dobbs and "Sam" Perris were seen in the neighborhood of Yonkers. The day after Leslie's body was found, Porter and Irving disappeared.

Mrs. Leslie was advised of the death of her husband by "Marm" Mandelbaum. She came to New York to the funeral (the expenses were borne by the noted receiver), was entertained by that lady, given a small sum of money and sent back to Philadelphia. Just before going she heard that Irving and Porter had been arrested on "general principles" by certain detectives. She went to the Tombs and saw them, but they treated her coldly, as though afraid of her. She paid another visit to

[*Turn To Page* 98]

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New York some time afterwards, in order to recover property taken possession of by the coroner at Yonkers, which had been found on her husband's body.

Again she made Mrs. Mandelbaum's house her headquarters, and there met Porter, who had been released. He treated her as before, and sneered at her, evading questions in regard to the possibility of George's associates having killed him. Porter's wife—a shop-girl in a Grand Street store—treated her as though pitying, yet dreading her. On this occasion, Mrs. Mandelbaum was "economically" generous to Mrs. Leslie.

Interest in the Leslie murder has waxed and waned since its commission. At times it has appeared as if the secret would out; at others to be as far from solution as ever. It is said that the actual murderer has been often named, and that he now occupies a liquor saloon in the city under cover of a dummy proprietor, and his place is the resort of thieves and detectives.

The operations of the Leslie gang—composed of men bound by the strongest of ties to "Marm" Mandelbaum—in nine years, in this city alone, amounted to a round half-million of dollars. Throughout the United States their plunderings cannot have been less than $7,000,000, comprising 80 per cent of all the bank robberies perpetrated from 1860 to the date of Leslie's death.

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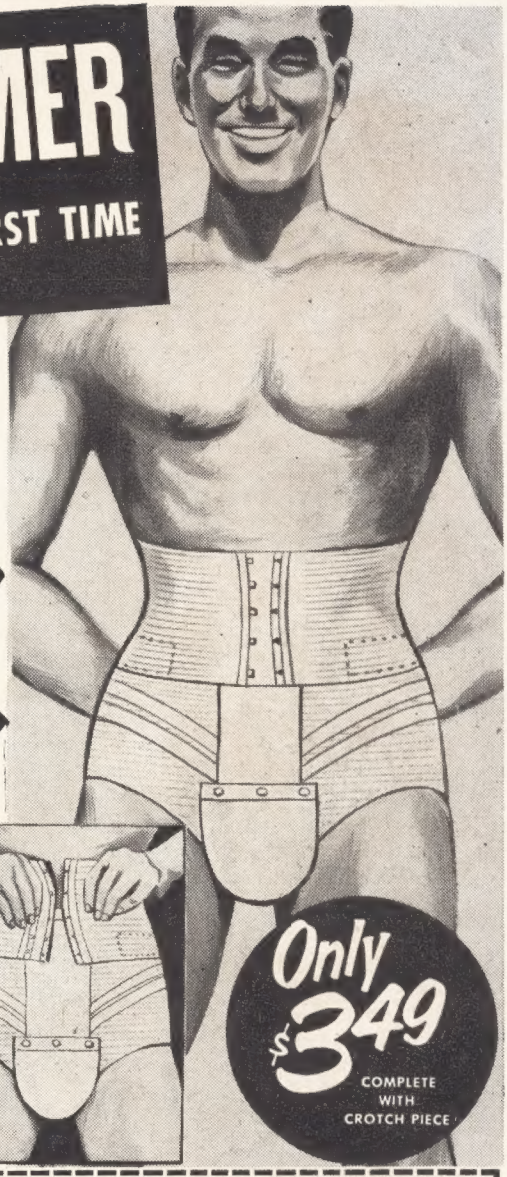

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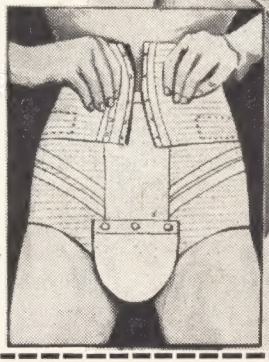

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